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Adventure, Intrigue, and Terror: Arabs and the Middle East in Hollywood Film Music

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Introduction

Hollywood's relationship with Arabs and the Middle East has been fraught with misconceptions since the beginnings of film. Theater, art, and opera have long contained stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims as mysterious and mystical, while simultaneously dangerous and barbaric. When film grew as a new means of cultural expression in the early twentieth century, it subsequently began to draw upon these preexisting tropes. Similarly, film music has perpetuated longstanding tropes from classical music in its portrayals of Arab places, cultures, and people. These trends are intensely rooted in the Orientalism described by postcolonial theorist Edward Said.[1] In the years since Said published his seminal book of the same name in 1978, various scholars have applied Said's lens to many different disciplines, as well as continued to document the ever-growing repertoire of recognizable Orientalist tropes. Film studies scholars are one group that have explored the prevalence of such tropes in Western film media. Of the many stereotypes and misrepresentations that plague Hollywood, those of the Arab world and its peoples have ostensibly been the most damaging and resilient.

In considering a complete view of Hollywood's relationship with these representations, several subjects warrant exploration: how Arabs have historically been portrayed in Hollywood, how these representations are treated in film music, and, most importantly, how these musical depictions function in the context of their respective films. To date, no study has considered the

[1] Some have criticized the term "postcolonial" as being "prematurely celebratory" for implying that colonialism is an artifact of the past without a continuing presence. I use the term simply due to its ubiquity in the literature, and not out of any such implications. For more on this, see Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism,'" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 291–304.

ways that music perpetuates the Othering of Arabs in popular Western film and how it complicates the way the audience is meant to perceive Arab themes. This thesis examines two of the many established and contradictory tropes: that of the Arab world and its peoples as sources of adventure and intrigue, and that of Arabs as threatening and prone to terrorism. Though the stereotype of the "aggressive" Arab is by no means new, films involving Arabs since the later parts of the twentieth century have increasingly resorted to portrayals of aggression and malice compared to earlier films. This is a result of cinematic themes responding to concurrent political events—in this case, U.S. military involvement in the Arab world and Middle East.

I argue that the terrorist stereotype that has become common in film is paralleled by methods of musical scoring that differ distinctly from previous romanticized depictions. When film composers wish to draw upon tropes of intrigue, mystery, etc., they typically use traditional orchestration, writing lyrical and exotic "Arabesque" melodies that often emphasize Western instruments such as the oboe, flute, and tambourine.[2] These stem from well-established methods of sounding the exotic that composers of classical music have used for centuries. Conversely, when today's film composers seek to evoke emotions of fear and unease in their representation of Arabs and the East, they turn instead to abstract orchestration and the incorporation of non-Western instruments (e.g., oud, *ney*, *duduk*) or vocals to distinctly mark "Arabness" as something

[2] "Arabesque" is a term used by European artists to refer to the highly ornamented borders commonly found in Islamic architecture. In music, the term came to denote highly ornamented melodic lines that supposedly simulated the visual effect of such art. See Maurice J. E. Brown and Kenneth L. Hamilton, "Arabesque(i)," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed April 1, 2019, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

emphatically opposed to the West.[3] The primary functions of these two types of scores differ in important ways: the former serves to set an exotic atmosphere, while the latter typically draws attention to an antagonist's Arab or Middle Eastern ethnicity (their Otherness), or establishes associations between Arab/Middle Eastern culture and scenes of violence.

It might be useful to define what is meant by "Arab" and the "Arab world." On account of the breadth of conquest which followed the founding of Islam in the seventh century, today's Arab world is typically considered to include twenty-two nations, most of which are outside of the geographic Arabian Peninsula: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia,[4] Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Referring to the "Arab world" is not meant to flatten the cultural, religious, or linguistic diversity amongst these places, yet they are unified in being predominantly Arabic-speaking. Furthermore, a key facet of Orientalism is the mass generalization of the Orient, thus viewing these diverse nations *as if* they were one cohesive "Arabia" or "Orient." Similarly, the Orientalist view, which is fundamentally Islamophobic, often does not distinguish between "Muslim" and "Arab," even though not all Arabs are Muslim, nor are all Muslims Arab. Due to the popular conflation of the two, many of the stereotypes which Hollywood applies to Arabs are also applied to other Middle Eastern and

[3] Hereafter scare quotes around "Arabness" will be implied.

[4] Though considered a part of the Arab world due to close historical ties with Arab societies, most Somalians are not actually Arabs, but are ethnic Somalis. Nevertheless, the dominant religion in Somalia is Islam (Sunni), and Arabic is one of the official languages of Somalia.

Islamic groups, such as Turks and Iranians/Persians. Western popular culture regularly refers to any and all inhabitants of the Middle East as "Arab," thereby denying the region's diversity. [5]

This study examines seven archetypal films (see Table 1), most of which are directly about Arabs, however at times other groups are discussed. The films were selected based on their demonstration of broader trends in representation, as well as their cultural significance.[6] For the sake of organizational clarity, I analyze the included films in chronological order, with Chapter II including close readings of the "adventure and intrigue" films and Chapter III examining the "terrorist" films. Comparing differences in musical scoring provides insight into some of the ways that Hollywood has historically represented the stereotype of Arab culture as exotic and mysterious in its music, and how this differs from the ways that film composers increasingly use music to conjure emotions of fear and terror in relation to Arab themes. I also explore these films' respective social, historical, and political contexts, which motivate their representations and musical aesthetics.

Film Title	**Year**	**Director / Composer**
The Crusades	1935	Cecil B. DeMille / Rudolph Kopp
Action in Arabia	1944	Léonide Moguy / Roy Webb
Lawrence of Arabia	1962	David Lean / Maurice Jarre
The Siege	1998	Edward Zwick / Graeme Revell
Body of Lies	2008	Ridley Scott / Marc Streitenfeld

[5] For more on the history of Arabs and the Arab world, see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002).

[6] A more extensive list of films can be found in the filmography at the end of this thesis.

Argo	2012	Ben Affleck / Alexandre Desplat
Zero Dark Thirty	2012	Kathryn Bigelow / Alexandre Desplat

Table 1. Films included in this study. Shaded films are classified in the "adventure and intrigue" category of Chapter II, while unshaded films are classified in the "terrorist" category of Chapter III.

There are a few things to note about the films in this study. First and foremost, it is not my aim to present a comprehensive or holistic view of these representations. I merely desire to identify observed tendencies and to provide and analyze examples of them. Second, though my groupings of these stereotypes may appear to be definitive "categories," they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Though each film mentioned here is used as an example of a particular kind of portrayal and its musical counterparts, this is not to say that their depictions are simplistic or uncomplicated; each film includes numerous different tropes other than the primary one that I choose to examine. *Lawrence of Arabia*, for example, includes nearly as many (if not more) portrayals of Arabs as aggressive and primitive as it does of Arabia as a romanticized and mystical place. However, I use it as a case study for the latter due to the character of its music, which mostly serves to mystify the desert and imbue the film with an aura of intrigue and adventure (part of which, it could be argued, is predicated on the risk of danger).

Finally, though I am suggesting a phenomenon that involves a change in how film composers represent Arabs and their world, I am *not* suggesting that the stereotype of the threatening Arab is in any way new. Rather, I argue that the specific way this trope usually manifests has shifted from portraying Arabs as barbaric and crude (yet ultimately inferior or

"uncivilized," and perhaps even bumbling and comical[7]) to portraying Arabs as conspiring terrorists that pose a significant threat to the Western world. Additionally, whereas previously Arab characters might have been portrayed as dangerous and unpredictable, they remained confined to the East. The threat of Arabs—and more broadly, Muslims—has expanded in modern film to become a domestic threat, playing off of the Islamophobic fear of terrorism fomented among the Western public since the late twentieth century, and certainly since 9/11. This assertion is supported by the work of Said and other postcolonial theorists. As the West has been gradually losing its direct hegemony over the Arab world, it has increasingly emphasized existing tropes of evil and malice in order to grapple with the lost sense of control or dominance that had previously "domesticated" the region and enabled it to serve as Said's Orient: an exotic and almost paradisal fantasy-land. Part of my work in this thesis is identifying how film composers have decided to score this shift to communicate particular ideas and associations to the audience.

To illustrate these points, I combine approaches from a number of different disciplines, mainly Orientalism/postcolonial theory, film studies, and musicology. Many film scholars have done extensive work on Hollywood's treatment of Arab themes, yet they rarely mention music's role in these representations. A corresponding gap exists in the musicological literature; musicologists have written quite extensively on musical exoticism and Orientalism, yet such

[7] In her study of Muslims in Bugs Bunny cartoons, Özlem Sensoy notes that "While all mad Muslim men carry large menacing weapons (often swords, sometimes rifles, and often their own menacing bodies), they are frequently inept at using them. They can easily be tricked, fooled, or cajoled by our Western hero into doing his will." Özlem Sensoy, "'Mad Man Hassan Will Buy Your Carpets!' The Bearded Curricula of Evil Muslims," *Counterpoints* 346 (2010): 122.

studies are primarily concerned with classical music, especially opera, and have neglected film music.[8] One of the goals I hope to achieve is to bridge this gap, connecting the literature on musical and cinematic Orientalism.

[8] Examples include Ralph P. Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East," *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 20–53; Ralph P. Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," *The Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 477–521; Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); James Parakilas, "The Soldier and the Exotic: Operatic Variations on a Theme of Racial Encounter, I," *The Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 33–56.

I. Orientalism, Exoticism, and Film

Edward Said theorized that nearly all European and Western representations of the East since the dawn of the modern era have been permeated by a pattern of Orientalism, which continues to shape how Westerners view the East.[9] According to Said's theory, Europeans and other Westerners constructed the Orient as a means of labeling the Other and defining Western society as something distinct from that of the East (pitting the Occident against the Orient). This involved the West essentializing and infantilizing the East (among many other things) in its representations, thereby exercising dominance over a cultural and geographic entity that they saw as a threat to European/Western hegemony. The list of Orientalist tropes is extensive, and many have been used to depict a variety of Others, regardless of differences between the cultures and peoples represented. Additionally, many of the ways that the Orient has been represented conflict with one another: the same Orient that conjures exotic fantasies of hypersexual women, magic carpets, and superstitious nomads simultaneously evokes images of barbaric men, conniving thieves, and war-mongering tribes. Over the centuries, these Western concepts of a static and unchanging East metastasized through cultural facets such as literature, scholarship, and the arts, as the imperial West continually perpetuated Orientalism through its hegemonic influence.

Dennis Porter criticizes some aspects of Said's Orientalism, claiming that Said ignores the fact that hegemonies change over time, making "nonsense of history at the same time as [he]

[9] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). Said's use of the word "Orient" specifically refers to the "Middle East" or "Near East," not necessarily the "Far East" (East Asia), with which Americans might associate the term. However, Said's concepts are widely applicable, not limited to a single geographic region.

invokes it with reference to imperial power/knowledge."[10] Porter's notion of changeable hegemonies is crucial to an understanding of how Orientalist representations change in film and music. Lina Khatib adds that "Hegemony is not fixed; it manifests itself in fluid forms which maintain its existence. Thus we can see the cinematic Otherness of Arabs surviving through its transformation from being about the womanizer/seducer of the 1920s . . . to being about the terrorist of today."[11] Collective methods of Othering thus change in correspondence to the ebb and flow of specific hegemonies. Orientalism should not be viewed as ossified or inflexible, although many specific Orientalist perceptions have remained constant over the last few centuries.

i. Musical Exoticism

Before the rise of the terrorist stereotype, Hollywood's musical portrayals of the East closely resembled those of classical music. Orientalism allowed composers to explore and domesticate the sound of the Other. Musical exoticism—how composers choose to depict other cultures and places, and Others—is closely related to the notion of Orientalism, and I use the term "musical Orientalism" here to refer to exoticist works that specifically aim to represent the Orient. In various disciplines, the West's position of dominance gave its artists the power to represent their Others (and consequently deny them the right to represent themselves), and

[10] Dennis Porter, "Orientalism and Its Problems," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 152.

[11] Lina Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., Ltd, 2006), 8.

composers have often attempted to write music that sounds as if it were from a particular non-Western locale. In classical music, many composers developed musical styles to evoke certain cultures and places, or at least to simply evoke a broader Other, and while many of these styles have their origins in real cultural traditions, exoticist tropes self-perpetuate, much like other Orientalist perceptions, as artists refer back to other tropes rather than anything in the real world. In the words of musicologist Derek Scott, "one might ask if it is necessary to know *anything* about Eastern musical practices [to compose exoticist music]; for the most part, it seems that only a knowledge of Orientalist signifiers is required."[12]

Composers have used Orientalist/exoticist signifiers for a long time, the first regularly used exoticist style in Europe being the *style turc*, which emerged after musicians and composers tried to recall the sound of the enemy military bands that they had heard during the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683.[13] Such styles inevitably involve a certain degree of essentializing; and especially since the nineteenth century musical Orientalism has tended to oversimplify musical traditions, ignoring complexities in rhythm, form, and pitch. Ralph Locke, an eminent scholar of musical exoticism, offers a few reasons for this reduction, such as the inadequacy of Western notation and musical practices to deal with intricacies like microtones, sounds unfamiliar to Western ears, and "the underlying assumption that non-Western culture was inherently less elaborated, more easily reduced to a few images . . . and musical tags."[14] By reducing Eastern

[12] Derek B. Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 309.

[13] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 310–11.

[14] Ralph P. Locke, "Musical Images of the Middle East," 35.

representations to simple signifiers—of which Scott provides an extensive list[15]—Western composers were able to more easily contrast the sound of the exotic and crude Orient with the complex and "civilized" West.

However, most Orientalist music is not concerned with authentically reproducing the music of the East, but rather to *evoke* or *represent* it to some or other cultural purpose. This has been noted by several musicologists and is one of the reasons why many exoticist works bear little resemblance to the musics that they refer to. Locke aptly points out that:

> The relationship between Eastern-tinted musical works and questions of factual truth . . . is rarely simple and direct. The works do not claim (or do not *only* claim) to represent the Middle East as it really is, as if they were travel books or 'objective' newspaper reports. Rather, they present themselves as fictions, as objects intended either to provide entertainment or invite aesthetic contemplation.[16]

[15] Orientalist/exoticist musical tropes that Scott identifies include: "Whole tones; aeolian, dorian, but especially the phrygian mode; augmented seconds and fourths (especially with lydian or phrygian inflections); arabesques and ornamented lines; elaborate "ah!" melismas for voice; sliding or sinuous chromaticism (for example, snaking downward on cor anglais); trills and dissonant grace notes; rapid scale passages (especially of an irregular fit, e.g., eleven notes to be played in the time of two crotchets); a melody that suddenly shifts to notes of shorter value; abrupt juxtapositions of romantic, lyrical tunes and busy, energetic passages; repetitive rhythms . . . and repetitive, small-compass melodies; ostinati; ad libitum sections (colla parte, senza tempo, etc.); use of triplets in duple time; complex or irregular rhythms; parallel movement in fourths, fifths, and octaves (especially in the woodwinds); bare fifths; drones and pedal points; 'magic' or 'mystic' chords (possessing uncertainty of duration and/or harmonic direction), harp arpeggios and glissandi . . . double reeds (oboe and especially cor anglais); percussion (especially tambourine, triangle, cymbals, and gong); and emphatic rhythmic figures on unpitched percussion (such as tom-toms, tambourine, and triangle)," in Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 327.

[16] Locke, "Musical Images of the Middle East," 22. The question of authenticity and the purposes of exoticist music is also covered by Locke in "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," 481–482; as well as in Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 326.

Regardless of similarity to actual musical practices, musical Orientalism still perpetuates incorrect perceptions of foreign cultures, and therefore corresponds with Said's postcolonial narrative. The exoticist styles that composers developed to signify their Others are manifestations of a focus on ethnic, racial, and cultural differences, and an overarching practice of emphasizing these differences to define the self as opposed to the Other.

The ways in which this is done can be intricate. In another article, Locke denotes two paradigms of musical exoticism, contending that a piece does not necessarily have to utilize established exoticist styles to be functionally exoticist. He refers to what he calls the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm and the "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm, arguing that (in the framework of the latter) a piece can still evoke a faraway place without utilizing established exoticist styles, and that the "Full Context" of a work determines its exoticism.[17] In the "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm, factors such as the title of a work, its lyrics, or—in opera and film—its staging and setting can prime the audience to hear ostensibly non-exoticist music as representative of something Other. While the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm is still useful for strictly instrumental works, when dealing with programmatic music (as film music is), taking complete stock of what the audience is experiencing can often widen what might be considered exoticist. In film (as well as in this thesis), this has obvious applications, for a film score might not have any traditionally exoticist qualities, yet still function as such. As Locke describes this process, the non-musical elements of a film or opera might "place the character or group in a given Elsewhere," while "the music marks the character or group indelibly as 'barbarous,'

[17] Ralph P. Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," 478.

'seductive,' 'wise,' or whatever. The audience melds the two discrete messages into an indissoluble whole."[18] In this way, the music of a film can still contribute to Orientalist stereotypes without adhering to easily recognizable musical stereotypes.

Qualities of the Other like those listed by Locke are used in musical opposition to the West, which is an assumed default. Musical "markedness" is a term which refers to "the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition," wherein a "marked" term is defined only by its opposition to the "unmarked."[19] Described by music theorist Byron Almén:

> The unmarked term is genetically prior (it can signify independently of the marked term), occurs more frequently, and has a wider range of meanings, and represents the normal or normative. The marked term is genetically subsequent—it defines itself only in opposition to the unmarked term—and thus occurs less frequently, with a narrower range of meanings, and represents that which is exceptional, that which falls short of, or deviates from, the norm.[20]

In the context of the film scores in this study, Arabness is the marked term; its deviation from the norm imbues it with exoticism. Additionally, its markedness impacts its valuation: Almén notes that such deviations are often valued either more or less than that which is unmarked.[21] In this frame, Arabness clearly denotes inferiority by its comparison to the (unmarked) West. In Hollywood more broadly as well, Western whiteness is assumed as the generic default, and Arabness (or indeed any kind of Otherness) is used in opposition to this. In the opening of her

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[18] Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," 492.

[19] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 291.

[20] Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 47.

[21] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 49.

essay "Eating the other: Desire and resistance," bell hooks notes that "Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture."[22] Films dealing with Arab themes, regardless of the specific tropes they use, invariably use ethnicity as a kind of "spice" in this way.

ii. The Classic Oriental Other in Film

Film functions as a cultural tool that allows Orientalist, oppositional binaries like those discussed above to flourish. Said noted that "One aspect of the electronic postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds."[23] Of course, Hollywood did not invent the stereotypes it uses; most (if not all) of them were inherited from Europe, where the East and its inhabitants had been portrayed in particular ways for centuries.[24] The Eastern tropes that popular film has consistently relied on over the last century are merely offshoots of the very same ones that were used in European theater, opera, literature, and other art forms.

Jack Shaheen thoroughly documented the stereotyping of Arabs in popular film and television, and his research offers a useful expansion to Said's *Orientalism*. Shaheen notes that

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[22] bell hooks, "Eating the other: Desire and resistance," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 366.

[23] Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

[24] For more information on the historical relationship between the U.S. and Arabs/Muslims, see Michael W. Suleiman, "Islam, Muslims, and Arabs in America: The Other of the Other of the Other...," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1999): 33–47.

from its beginnings, popular film has caricatured the East as a mythical and static "Arab-land," essentially mirroring Said's Orient.[25] Such conceptions of the Orient are a result of extreme generalization; just as with Orientalist music, Orientalism in film has involved a reduction of stereotyped traits, so as to create a shorthand formula for representing the East. John Eisele writes that over time the features of Hollywood's Orient "became reduced and refined in the crucible of repeated reworkings until any film about the Middle East shared a limited set of elements."[26]

For most of the twentieth century, the Orientalist "elements" emphasized by Hollywood were those of mystery, intrigue, and adventure. The so-called "desert romance" was especially popular, emerging from Orientalist works of the nineteenth century. Films such as *The Sheik* (1921) and *Son of the Sheik* (1926) (see Figure 1) were influential within this genre.[27] Most Hollywood films set in the East (or dealing at all with related characters or themes) portrayed it in exotic and charming terms, an abstraction on which white Westerners could project their

[25] Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2001), 8. Akin to Scott's list of musical tropes, Shaheen provides his own collection of stereotypes in film: settings with "[oases], oil wells, palm trees, tents, fantastically ornate palaces, sleek limousines, and, of course, camels," complete with "curved daggers, scimitars, magic lamps, giant feather fans, and nargelihs [hookahs]," women wearing "chadors, hijabs, bellydancers' see-through pantaloons, veils, and jewels for their navels," and men wearing "dark glasses, fake black beards, exaggerated noses, worry beads, and checkered burnooses."

[26] John C. Eisele, "The Wild East: Deconstructing the Language of Genre in the Hollywood Eastern," *Cinema Journal* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 68. There are obvious limitations to genre analyses of film, however Eisele's observations are useful in understanding Arab representation.

[27] Najat Z. J. Dajani, "Arabs in Hollywood: Orientalism in Film" (master's thesis, The University of British Columbia, 2000), 9.

fantasies and adventures. [28] As with Orientalist and exoticist music, such films provided escapism to their audiences, allowing them to experience alluring, far-off places vicariously, where they could see and hear things unlike what they were used to. [29] Arabs and their world served as a constructed Other that allowed American audiences to both explore the unfamiliar and further their own cultural identity by contrast.

[28] Examples of such films include *Action in Arabia* (1944), *Algiers* (1938), *Arabian Nights* (1942), *Beau Geste* (1939, remade 1966), *Cairo* (1942), *The Crusades* (1935), *The Garden of Allah* (1936), *The Lost Patrol* (1934), *Morocco* (1930), *Sudan* (1945), and *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924, remade 1940), among countless others.

[29] Brian T. Edwards, "Yankee Pashas and Buried Women: Containing Abundance in 1950s Hollywood Orientalism," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 31, no. 2 (2001): 18; Jamie C. Fries, "Foes on Film: The Evolution of Hollywood Portrayals of Soviets and Middle Easterners, 1980-2001" (PhD diss., Ohio University, 2005), 123. Although outdated, another useful source on this subject is Jimmy Lloyd Ball, "Exotic, Historical, Escapist, 'Sword and Sorcery' Motion Pictures Produced in America" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1977).

Figure 1. Agnes Ayres and Rudolph Valentino in *The Sheik* (1921).

Naturally, however, simplistic representations such as these often include contradictions. Eisele describes two opposing iterations of Middle Eastern representation in Hollywood:

> a positive or an irenic one . . . which saw the East as a land of adventure, ancient knowledge, magic, and fantasy, and a negative one, which viewed the East, through the eyes of colonialism, as a land of ignorance and corruption, savagery and decadence, just waiting for the hand of Western civilization to 'recivilize' it.[30]

Eisele further separates Hollywood representations of the Arab world into general categories, including "Arabian nights," "sheik," "foreign legion," and "foreign intrigue."[31] All of these groupings encompass the kinds of films mentioned above: primarily romance narratives that play

[30] Eisele, "The Wild East," 69–70.

[31] Eisele, "The Wild East," 70–71.

into Orientalist perceptions of the East as a place of erotic fantasy. It is also probably true that many of these "positive" and "negative" stereotypes are related, that tropes of the East as "corrupt" and "savage" are exactly what make it simultaneously intriguing and enticing. The colonialist aspect of it is important as well, for the patronizing view that the Arab world needs to be "recivilized" furnishes a sense of purpose for the West, reminiscent of Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden."[32] Nonetheless, these kinds of portrayals are becoming a rarity in today's Hollywood, and it appears that there is an increasing reliance on the latter, negative associations.

iii. The Emergence of Terrorism in Film

Since the 1970s, negative portrayals of Arabs and the Middle East in Hollywood have gravitated towards a much more specific conception of antagonism than before. In his evaluation of Eastern tropes, Eisele outlines a fifth category: the "terrorist" subtype.[33] Of the five categories he provides, this is the only one that is entirely predicated on an Arab antagonist. Eisele concludes that the development of Arab representation since the 1970s "has been away from identification with Arab characters as heroes, heroines, or love interests toward 'disidentification' with them as antagonists, or 'unseen' enemies."[34] While almost all representations of Arabs in film—whether considered to be "positive" stereotypes or "negative"—are condescending and offensive, this change is significant. Arabs had certainly

[32] Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," in *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1940), 321–323.

[33] Eisele, "The Wild East," 70–71.

[34] Eisele, "The Wild East," 71.

been antagonists before, however rather than mostly being portrayed as bumbling and comical buffoons, they now have become sinister villains who pose a real threat to Westerners, both abroad and at home. These overtly negative portrayals have become the industry standard for Arab representation. Hollywood's recent propensity to portray the Arab world (and Middle East in general) as a hotbed of terrorism is an alarming transformation of the lavish and seductive settings of the early and mid-twentieth century. Yet, in the words of Brian Edwards, it should be remembered that "there is room in the American imaginary for multiple foreign Others."[35]

As opposed to the romantic version of previous decades, the filmic Orient since the 1970s has usually been characterized by "terrorism," "white slavery," and "immeasurable petro-dollar wealth,"[36] but why has this change occurred? Most film scholars attribute this to a politicization of Arab representation; the proliferation of the Arab terrorist in cinema has roughly corresponded to the development of the American imperial project after the second world war.[37] Abdelmajid

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[35] Edwards, "Yankee Pashas and Buried Women," 16.

[36] Abdelmajid Hajji, *Arabs in American Cinema (1894-1930): Flappers Meet Sheiks in New Movie Genre* (United States of America: Self-Published, 2013), 139–40.

[37] Relevant works on this change in representation include Sulaiman Arti, "The Evolution of Hollywood's Representation of Arabs Before 9/11: The Relationship Between Political Events and the Notion of 'Otherness,'" *Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network* 1, no. 2 (2007): 1–20; Sean Carter and Klaus Dodds, "Distant Others," in *International Politics and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 65–82; Dajani, "Arabs in Hollywood"; Eisele, "The Wild East"; Fries, "Foes on Film"; Lina Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East*; Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*, 2nd ed., vol. 6, American Crossroads (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Jay William Reid, "Discourses of Film Terrorism: Hollywood Representations of Arab Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, 1991-2011" (master's thesis, The University of Adelaide, 2013); and Nessim John Watson, "Action Movie Arabs and the American Call to Endless War: The Role of American Orientalism in Organizing the U.S. 'Response' to the 9/11 Crisis" (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2005).

Hajji has determined five major events which he thinks shaped public perceptions of Arabs and Muslims: 1) The establishment of Israel and ensuing conflict with Palestinians, 2) The Iran hostage crisis and other such events that placed American law enforcement against Arab/Muslim terrorists, 3) The 1973 oil crisis, 4) The Gulf War and subsequent legitimization of Islamophobia, and 5) The events of September 11, 2001.[38] Obviously, none of these is singularly responsible for the shift in representation, however it is the amalgamation of events such as these which has shaped American fears and perceptions of the region. As a consequence, Orientalist fantasies have become less viable in Hollywood, especially when American awareness of the Middle East is limited to scenes of violence, extremism, and militancy.

Although Orientalist fantasies are no longer the norm, they do still exist, however often with political undertones. Walt Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) is an excellent example, containing dual-stereotypes depicting the Arab world as both exotic and threatening. According to Edwards, "*Aladdin* can invoke that doubled meaning efficiently by referring back to a tradition of Hollywood films in which the phrase 'Arabian nights' has already been defined, before the Arab world occupied the privileged space of national Other, when it was merely foreign and exotic."[39] Even so, the film contains several allusions to concurrent politics of the Middle East, and many aspects of its animation and story are clearly influenced by U.S. involvement in Iran and Iraq.[40]

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[38] Hajji, *Arabs in American Cinema,* 138.

[39] Edwards, "Yankee Pashas and Buried Women," 15.

[40] Alan Nadel, "A Whole New (Disney) World Order: Aladdin, Atomic Power, and the Muslim Middle East," in *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film,* ed. Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 184–203.

Furthermore, part of what allows *Aladdin* to draw upon older stereotypes of mystery and wonder is its setting in an ambiguous (and assumedly bygone) Arab locale, which sufficiently distances the film from the current Middle East.

Those few films which still aim to utilize once-common tropes of adventure and intrigue must now somehow separate themselves from the present world.[41]. Thus, recent films that romanticize the East are almost always set in the past, before the rise of the terrorist stereotype (and the events listed by Hajji), and many times even before the advent of Islam (as in films dealing with ancient Egypt, which is an age-old Orientalist fixation[42]). From a postcolonial perspective, this is unsurprising; these romanticized images are harking back to a time before the fall of imperialism and Western hegemony. By contrast, the West of today exists in a world where (direct) colonialism is declining, and hence feels a lost sense of control in regard to the Middle East, which manifests in its films and popular media. Due to analogous changes in how Arabs and the Middle East are scored, composers of today's Orientalist fantasies must necessarily turn to scoring methods common to classic films like *Lawrence of Arabia*.[43] Though these films do still show up from time to time, the exceptions prove the rule.

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[41] This is not the case for the films in Chapter II; where musical and filmic representations of the past Orient hardly differ at all from those of the present.

[42] Samuel Scurry claims that classic representations of (specifically ancient) Egypt are more resilient to shifting global politics than other Orientalist tropes: "Not even the blunt force of 9/11 and the Iraq War has affected any shift in cinematic depictions of Egypt, which remain fantastical and mummy-laden," in Samuel Thadeus Scurry, "Orientalism in American Cinema: Providing an Historical and Geographical Context for Post-Colonial Theory" (master's thesis, Clemson University, 2010), 91.

[43] When describing his process of composing the score to *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2010), an adventure film set in ancient Persia, Harry Gregson-Williams stated that "I wanted to try something that, if you closed your eyes, you might be watching a film from a long

Some scholars point to another reason for the rise of the antagonistic Arab: its correlation with the dwindling of the Cold War and fall of the Soviet Union. Edwards refers to this as the shift from the "red menace" of communism to that of the "green terror" of Islamic fundamentalism.[44] In this view, the Arab world replaced the communist block as a cultural foil to the United States, with Arabs essentially moving up to become America's primary adversary. Some have contested this argument, correctly pointing out that terrorist themes and juxtaposition of the U.S. against the Middle East emerged well before communism's influence began to abate.[45] Regardless of which (if either) of these conclusions is the case, it is evident that the change in Arab representation that has occurred over the last half century is related to changes in the global political landscape, as Arabs and their world have been progressively seen as threatening to the American way of life (which is a conveniently vague concept).

This is why the terrorist image specifically has dominated to a much greater extent than previous negative stereotypes; the terrorist is a threat *at home*, much as American politicians led their public to believe communism was in order to justify foreign policy decisions. As Khatib points out: "With the events of September 11, 2001, the war on Iraq and shifting American

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time [ago], I don't know, from the fifties or sixties . . . ."[43] In other words, he sought to evoke Orientalist associations that have become less common over time (due to the rise of the terrorist stereotype), and did so by creating a romantic score like those from Hollywood's "Golden Age." Jérémie Noyer, "Composer Harry Gregson-Williams akes us far, far away, from *Prince of Persia* to *Shrek Forever After*," *Animated Views*, July 12, 2010, accessed April 1, 2019, http://animatedviews.com/2010/composer-harry-gregson-williams-takes-us-far-far-away-from-prince-of-persia-to-shrek-forever-after/.

[44] Edwards, "Yankee Pashas and Buried Women," 13.

[45] Fries, "Foes on Film."

interests in the on-going Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Middle East has been perceived globally as a place of conflict that is no longer confined to its geographical setting."[46] The West has always constructed the Arab world as a dangerous place, yet this danger was domesticated and confined, and did not interfere with its ability to serve as a playground for Western adventures. When changing perceptions of the area no longer allowed this possibility, Western culture reacted by vilifying Arabs to a greater extent than ever before.

Hollywood and the media continually hyperbolize the threat from Arabs, the vast majority of whom are not terrorists, creating a cultural environment in which there is no space for positive representations. In his book *Covering Islam*, Said acknowledges that, like any stereotype, there is some truth to depictions of terrorists:

> The general state of the Islamic world . . .seems backward and cruel . . . In addition, the (to me) simplistic reductiveness of some numbers of people who have recourse to a hazy fantasy of seventh century Mecca as a panacea for numerous ills in today's Muslim world makes for an unattractive mix that it would be rank hypocrisy to deny.[47]

Even so, however, journalists make broad, unfounded claims which make their way into popular media. "Looming over their work is the slippery concept . . ., writes Said, "of '*fundamentalism*,' a word that has come to be associated almost automatically with Islam . . . ."[48] The same Orientalist generalization which views Arabs, Muslims, and Middle Easterners as a single unit also paints the brush of "fundamentalism" over all three groups. Islamic fundamentalism's

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[46] Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East*, 1.

[47] Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), xv.

[48] Said, *Covering Islam*, xvi.

conflation with Islam as a whole is discussed at length by Khatib, who writes that, in today's age of media sensationalism, Islamophobia, and the War on Terror,

> This mythical Other [the Islamic fundamentalist] is usually perceived as an "enemy" in a battle of good versus evil, us against them. Fundamentalism has thus been looked at as a symptom of the Otherness of the Arab world, rather than as a problem within it. The other side of this construction is that of the United States as a nation. In contrast to the degeneracy of the Arab/Muslim/fundamentalist Other, the United States in Hollywood stands superior, morally right, unbeatable.[49]

Representations such as the ones discussed in this thesis reveal the cultural assumptions and political contexts from which they stem. Films are not created in a vacuum; they are products of their time, and rather than treating films as standalone works of art, they should be analyzed for what they can reveal about the "cultural obsessions" of their day (to use Locke's phrase).[50] Ethnomusicologist Timothy Taylor makes similar suggestions in his book *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, warning against overlooking historical context when interpreting exoticist music (or music in general), arguing that more complex questions should be asked "about composers as social actors in particular times and places."[51] The same could be said of film music, and certainly film itself. Hollywood movies are appendages of American cultural perceptions, playing into the fantasies and fears of the public. There is significant value in exploring these tendencies.

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[49] Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East*, 166.

[50] Locke, "Musical Images of the Middle East," 21.

[51] Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism*, 3–4.

iv. Sending Messages Through Film Music

Music plays an important—and often unnoticed—role in how Arabs are perceived in film. Some might argue that music in films involving the Arab world (or any non-Western themes, for that matter) is only meant to "set the scene." However, music's functions in film are much more complex, and consequently can be much more precarious. Depending on the type of Arab Otherness that is being portrayed, films use music in several different ways. Composer Aaron Copland suggested five purposes of film music: constructing an atmosphere, underlying a character's psychological state, providing a "neutral background filler," promoting continuity, and fabricating tension and release.[52] This is obviously not an exhaustive list, but the first of Copland's list has obvious ties to Orientalist depictions in film. Hollywood depictions of the twentieth century that drew upon tropes of mystery and intrigue almost always used music to "set the scene," providing aural signifiers to alert the audience to the exotic themes at hand. The terrorist representations that arose later, however, utilize music in a different way. Rather than merely establishing an exotic atmosphere, they often serve instead to emphasize Arabness as something ominous and threatening.

Noël Carroll proposes a theoretical framework for "modifying music" in film scores, in which music serves to "characterize" a scene, conveying information that augments it in some way.[53] This has a bit more nuance than Copland's notion of creating an atmosphere, and is

[52] Aaron Copland, "Tip to Moviegoers: Take Off Those Ear-Muffs," *The New York Times*, November 6, 1949.

[53] Noël Carroll, *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 141.

somewhat related to Locke's "All the Music in Full Context" Paradigm. According to Carroll, elements of a film (e.g., visuals, narrative, dialogue, diegetic sound) serve as "indicators," establishing the basic information of a scene. The music then "tells us something, of an emotive significance, about what the scene is about; the music supplies us with, so to say, a description (or presentation) of the emotive properties the film attaches to the referents of the scene."[54] Apropos of terrorist portrayals, music is often used as a "modifier" to emphasize an evil character's Arab ethnicity, or associate fear in general with "Arab" sounds. Yet, keeping in mind Locke's Paradigm, the music need not be identifiably exoticist or "Eastern" in order for it to fulfill its function as a "modifier." The music of a scene could be ethnically ambiguous, but its emotive quality could still create associations between Arab characters and themes with ominous and threatening sentiments.

Music is a crucial component of the messages that a film expresses. Claudia Gorbman calls attention to the fact that "the connotative values which music carries, via cultural codes and also through textual repetition and variation, in conjunction with the rest of the film's soundtrack and visuals" all contribute to a film's general effect.[55] Thus, music helps determine whether a film's version of the Orient is one of adventure and intrigue or one of terrorism.

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[54] Carroll, *Theorizing the Moving Image*, 142.

[55] Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 30.

II. "Adventure and Intrigue" Films

The first set of films to be examined in this study portray the Arab world/Middle East in much the same way that Orientalists of various disciplines had been depicting it for most of the modern era. They provide the audience with a predictable and "domesticated" East that closely aligns with Said's Orient: a setting in which white Westerners can have their adventures, providing magic, intrigue, mysticism, and general exotic color (quite literally). Such uses of the East dominated popular Hollywood films through most of the twentieth century. This chapter will look at three quintessential films in this category: *The Crusades* (1935), *Action in Arabia* (1944), and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). These films emphasize the exoticness of the East and are largely characterized by their interpretation of the Orient as being dangerous, yet ultimately under control, either explicitly by colonialist forces or more subtly by implicit assumptions of white racial superiority and Christian ideological superiority. For the most part, these films push Arab characters to the background, where they function as nothing more than another part of the set, adding perceived authenticity to the setting. Even in instances (such as in *Lawrence of Arabia*) where Arab characters play larger roles, they still perpetuate Orientalist tropes, showing them to be submissive to white imperialists and in desperate need of "civilization."

The music reflects these themes, as composers use it primarily to "set the scene" geographically and to amplify the exotic sentiments being conveyed onscreen. Often composers in this first category create musical juxtapositions of "East" and "West," with conventional exoticist "Eastern" signifiers contrasting with either Western classical styles or, in the case of plots dealing with imperialism, European military marches. These representations are gendered as well: Western themes convey a prideful masculinity, while Eastern themes symbolize a

sensual, exotic, and seductive femininity (or occasionally a toxic, oppressive masculinity that is diametrically opposed to that of the West). These gendered connotations relate to an overarching concept of an orderly West and a *dis*orderly East, which is in need of Western colonial guidance.

i. *The Crusades* (1935)

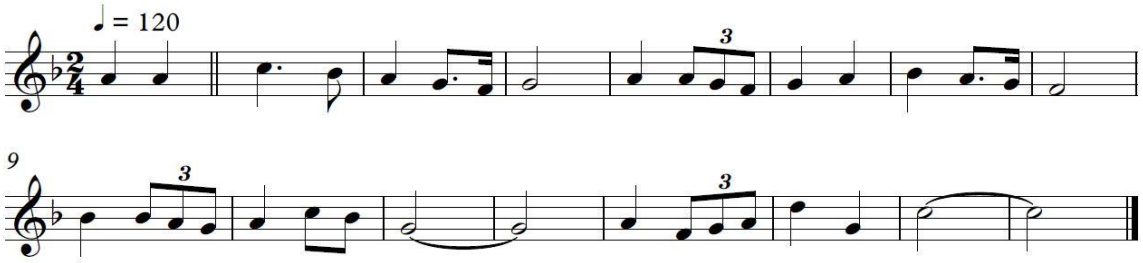
Directed by Cecil B. DeMille and with music composed by Rudolph Kopp, *The Crusades* is loosely based on the events of the Third Crusade of 1187, with many elements drawn from other historical events, or fictionalized altogether. It follows King Richard the Lionheart of England (Henry Wilcoxon) as he travels east to wrest the Holy Land from the grip of Saladin (Ian Keith) and the Saracens.[56] The film is exotic not just due to its location, but also due to its time period: Locke points out that "the fascination with the Middle Ages . . . often embodies a search for an exotic alternative, for a world different in feeling or values."[57] In this way, then, *The Crusades* is doubly exotic, drawing upon notions of perceived Oriental ancientness and *actual* antiquity.

In line with the film's extravagant production, Kopp's score is typical of the era, offering heroic and grandiose music to accompany the clash of civilizations. This is made apparent from the very first shot of the film: as the titles come onscreen at the beginning, three European knights on horseback ride forward and play a fanfare on trumpets, ushering in the main theme for

[56] "Saracen" is an antiquated term used during the Crusades to refer to Muslims, and typically Arabs specifically. It should also be noted that the historical Saladin was a Kurd, not an Arab, however this distinction is unimportant in the context of the film.

[57] Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 64.

the European protagonists (Example 1). Kopp establishes musical opposition of West and East immediately. Directly after this exposition, the film fades to a shot of Jerusalem, and the music quickly modulates from G major to the parallel minor as a muezzin recites the *adhan*,[58] which not only sets the scene in the East, but also establishes Muslims as the film's antagonistic Other. Intertitles accentuate this through vivid imagery: "The year 1187 A.D. The Saracens of Asia swept over Jerusalem and the Holy Land, crushing the Christians to death or slavery."[59]



Example 1. The stately European fanfare, diatonic and rigid.[60]

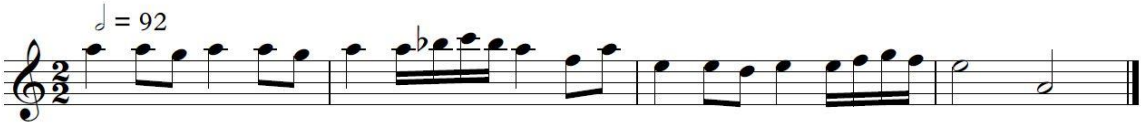
With this, as the invaders are shown violently tearing a cross off of a building, the main theme for the Arabs is introduced: a hasty and chaotic motif featuring augmented seconds and light timbres (Example 2). The music for the Arabs in the film is very similar to the kinds of representations of the East found in European classical music, expressing weakness, crudity, and disorder in the form of frantic runs, thinner timbres (like oboe and flute), and frequent use of

[58] The Muslim call to prayer.

[59] *The Crusades*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2006), DVD.

[60] All transcriptions are original and are only meant to illustrate certain points, rather than being exact reproductions.

chromaticism. This stands in opposition to the trumpet fanfare and generally brass-heavy heroic themes that accompany the actions of the European crusaders. In general, the Christian motifs in *The Crusades* convey strength, dignity, and order (in a word: masculinity), which is accomplished (as in Example 1) through heavy reliance on brass, stately fanfares, and forward-driving march rhythms. These two categories of motifs are used in direct juxtaposition, with Eastern themes equipping the Arabs with qualities such as exoticness or barbarity, while the European themes demonstrate the resilience of the Christians in the face of Arab/Muslim aggression, emphasizing their chivalry and honor.



Example 2. The main Arab theme, fast and chaotic.

A prime example of Kopp's use of Western themes in this specific way can also be found in the beginning of the film, after Saladin and his Muslim army take Jerusalem. Having entered the holy city, Arabs in the streets are shown abusing its inhabitants and selling Christian women as slaves. This is interrupted by the arrival of Saladin and his retinue, as his banners, servants, and horses progress through the streets, complete with scimitars and accompanied by diegetic drums (which serve as musical symbols for the Saracens in general). Right away, in these two sequences—the pillaging of Jerusalem and the arrival of Saladin—classic contradictory images of the Orient are presented to the audience, that of Arabs as heartless savages and simultaneously as lavish, exotic rulers. Having consecutively established these two images, a figure emerges from the crowd to challenge the Muslim invaders. Known only as the Hermit (C. Aubrey Smith),

he proclaims to Saladin that the Saracens will never be able to prevail over the power of Christ and declares his mission to go to Christendom and call upon its rulers to take back the city (Figure 2). As he enters his impassioned speech, the Arabs around him begin to laugh at his foolish ambition. However, his ridicule is underscored by surging hymn-like music in a major key, evoking sympathy for the Hermit and casting him as a just holy man who has been oppressed by unreasonable infidels (a perception that is furthered by his martyrdom later in the film). The music continues to rise as intertitles transition to a montage of the Hermit appealing to various Christian kings: "Uplifted and unwearying, the Hermit carries his message through all the Christian nations until a deathless flame is kindled in the hearts of the people."

Figure 2. The Hermit standing before Saladin, his white skin and hair and humble garb starkly contrasting with the surrounding Arabs with turbans, scimitars, and veils.

Though Western and Eastern motifs are pitted against each other throughout the film, there are several instances where their contradistinction is especially conspicuous. The first time the crusaders and the Saracens engage in battle at the Siege of Acre, the Christians are heard singing their main theme (Example 1) as they approach the walled city. As soon as they arrive at the walls, however, the Saracens begin playing drums in a rhythm not unlike the stereotypical "tom-tom beat" that has been cited by some scholars as a signifier for "mostly imagined, 'primitive' or 'exotic' world contexts."[61] This produces an auditory "clash of civilizations" so to speak, as both parties continue their respective music. Once the actual fighting begins, the aural battle continues, going back and forth between the heroic theme of the crusaders and the brisk war music of the Muslim "infidels" (Example 2). In line with the "clash of civilizations" narrative that Kopp's score outlines, the Christian's eventual victory is declared with the triumph of their theme over that of the Muslims.

When the two groups fight again outside the walls of Jerusalem, the musical juxtaposition that occurs is even more obvious. As the armies race towards each other, the camera pans quickly from one side to the other, with the music changing abruptly from one theme to the other (Figure 3). This audio-visual panning becomes more and more rapid until they finally clash together, after which the music continues to exchange between the robust brass of the crusaders and the reedy woodwinds of the Arabs. In both this sequence and that of the Siege of Acre, the

[61] A. J. Racy, "Domesticating Otherness: The Snake Charmer in American Popular Culture," *Ethnomusicology* 60, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2016): 206. Rather than the "LOUD soft soft soft" beat that Racy references, the rhythm of the Saracens in this scene (and in later battle sequences) is "LOUD soft soft LOUD soft soft" at a faster tempo, however it still draws upon the same cultural associations.

music makes a very clear distinction between the courageous protagonists and the evil Other, whose music has thinner timbres and is riddled with deviant-sounding augmented seconds. By alternating between them in succession, the qualitative difference between the two is thus immediately apparent.

Figure 3. Alternating shots between the charging armies of the Saracens (left) and the crusaders (right).

Such musical qualities as found in the battle sequences, while aurally depicting the Arabs as less civilized and more chaotic than the Europeans (in spite of the so-called "Islamic Golden Age" that was occurring during the Middle Ages), also cast them as seductive and mysterious foreign Others. The character of Saladin demonstrates this side of Arab representation in *The Crusades*. This is evident the first time the crusaders meet the sultan, to announce their intentions to conquer the Holy Land. As in most of the film, Saladin's arrival (and departure) is preceded with the drumming of his servants—again in a stereotyped fashion. The drums announce Saladin's presence, yet more importantly they announce his Otherness, priming the audience to view him in opposition to the Europeans. His foreignness contributes to an overall sense of mystery, however upon Saladin's entrance into the tent, Richard's wife Berengaria (Loretta

Young) exclaims "They told me he had horns like the devil. I think he's magnificent!" Additionally, Saladin shows off the sharpness of his sword by slicing a piece of silk in mid-air, which elicits gasps of "Work of the devil!" "Magic!" "Impossible!" and "Witchcraft!" from the crusaders. (To further highlight the remarkable and exotic nature of Saladin's abilities, Richard is later shown trying to cut silk with his own sword, to no avail.) Interactions like these cloak Saladin in allurement and establish him not as a barbarian, but as the enigmatic foe whom the honorable knights must defeat.

A major part of Saladin's characterization is his seductive charm, which is illustrated most clearly in his interactions with the queen Berengaria. This is one of the most popular images of the Orient: that of the Eastern man who seduces the Western woman, made especially popular in Hollywood with the release of films like *The Sheik* and *Son of the Sheik*. Additionally, the sexualization of the Orient almost always involves images of harems and scantily-clad women, usually in conjunction with dance and/or music.[62] When Saladin later captures the injured Berengaria and takes her to Jerusalem (where he intends to marry her), the scene that ensues follows this stereotype almost exactly. When Berengaria wakes up in Jerusalem, the shot is introduced with two women in Eastern garb playing a harp and a zurna-like instrument (which, in actuality, is voiced by a flute). Their music continues in the background as the sultan tries to woo his captive, promising her inconceivable power and riches. Scenes such as this one, which involve fantastical representations of the Orient as a place of ancient riches and enticement, have music that is light, metrically free, and romantic, quite different from the music that is used for

[62] Rebecca Stone, "Cinematic Salomes: An Investigation of Dance and Orientalism in Hollywood Films," *UCLA Journal of Dance Ethnology* 15 (1991): 40.

the Arabs in battle. Combined with the exotic set and costuming, these musical qualities create an atmosphere of romance and timelessness. This abets the air of mystical grace that surrounds Saladin and is also indicative of the Western fascination with “Arabian nights” stories (which, based on their prevalence in Hollywood film, seemed to be very common in the mid-twentieth century).

Figure 4.1. Two women playing exotic music in Saladin’s palace.

Figure 4.2. Saladin proposes to Berengaria. "Islam does not accept a Christian marriage."

Despite his exoticization, in many ways Saladin comes across as more graceful and composed than the Christian kings. On this subject, DeMille wrote in his autobiography that one of his goals in making *The Crusades* was "to bring out that the Saracens were not barbarians, but a cultivated people, and their great leader Saladin, as perfect and gentle a knight as any in Christendom."[63] The placement of the morally corrupt Richard against the gentle and chivalrous Saladin is revealing of Western societal perceptions of the East during the early- to mid-twentieth century. Certainly, Orientalism dominated the ways that Westerners thought of Arabs—as is evident in their choice of sets, music, and costuming—yet it is significant that an Arab character was portrayed as morally superior (or at least equal) to a Western character, and

[63] John Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (London: Routledge, 2003), 87.

that the two are able to reconcile their differences at the end. This could scarce be imagined today. Whereas films such as *The Crusades* included both "positive" and "negative" stereotypes (as Eisele describes them), films of today are gravitating towards the latter. Likewise, musical associations with one trope over the other have been changing in recent years, as composers adjust to the shift in representation—yet these points will be examined later.

ii. *Action in Arabia* (1944)

Many of the images of the Arab world found in *Action in Arabia* (directed by Léonide Moguy, with music by Roy Webb) are more or less identical to those found in *The Crusades*, in spite of the sizeable gap of their plots' respective time periods: as opposed to the medieval setting of *The Crusades*, *Action in Arabia* takes place in French-controlled Syria in 1941. Because of its contemporary setting in an era of direct colonialism, however, *Action in Arabia* portrays a Middle East that is a theater for conflict between Western powers, and portrays its peoples as pawns that are easily manipulated to serve the interests of the West. The entire plot revolves around this concept: the "action" referred to in the title involves American reporter Michael Gordon (George Sanders), who uncovers a Nazi plot in French-controlled Damascus to unite the Arab tribes against the Allies. The story is completely centered around white characters; the main purpose of the film's Eastern setting is to lend intrigue and mystery to the events that transpire.

The film's opening makes it very clear that this is the kind of Arab world that it aims to portray. After a brief introduction (discussed below), a map of the Arab world is shown onscreen, as a narrator sets the scene:

> In the spring of 1941, the eyes of a war-torn world turn to the Middle East. Dominating this vital area are the fiercely independent Arabs, whose domain stretches from Iraq on the East, across all of Africa to French and Spanish Morocco . . . Damascus: the oldest city in the world, for untold centuries the political center and metropolis of the Arab world. Damascus: *under the placid surface of its age-old civilization, a breeding place for espionage and intrigue* [emphasis mine].[64]

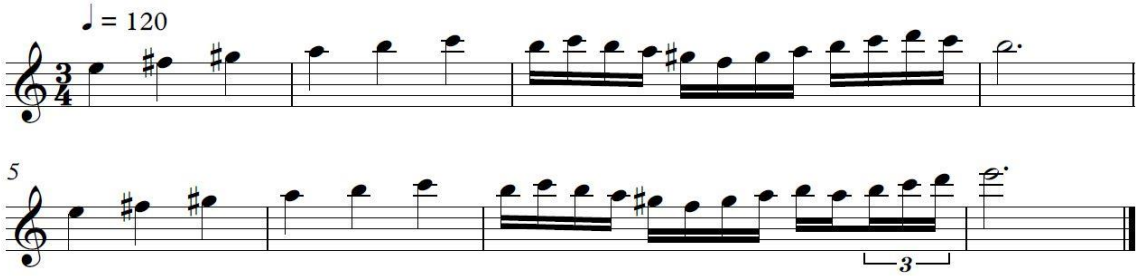
As in *The Crusades*, the East is very clearly viewed from an Orientalist perspective, emphasizing the ancientness and mystery of Damascus. Within this "Arab" setting, however, actual Arab people are completely unimportant as individuals; ironically, their presence is pushed to the background, where they act as nameless accessories to the setting that is supposedly their home. Many Arab-themed films of the period push Arabs to the periphery in this way, most notably *Casablanca* (1942), which uses the setting of Casablanca in Morocco as a means of creating an exotic and mysterious backdrop for a white-centered plot.[65] Ultimately, this perpetuates the concept of the Orient as a "playground" for Westerners, full of unfamiliar, exotic attractions whose foreignness makes the adventures of Westerners more exciting.

The music in *Action in Arabia* functions almost exclusively to intensify the underlying exotic atmosphere, and this introductory sequence is a good example. The orchestral introduction that plays before and during the narrator's voiceover establishes the film's Middle Eastern context, using augmented seconds and stereotyped drum patterns to assign a tone of roughness and primitivism to the locale, in much the same way as Kopp's score for *The Crusades* (see Example 3). All of this is overlaid with shots of camels and caravans moving across the desert (a

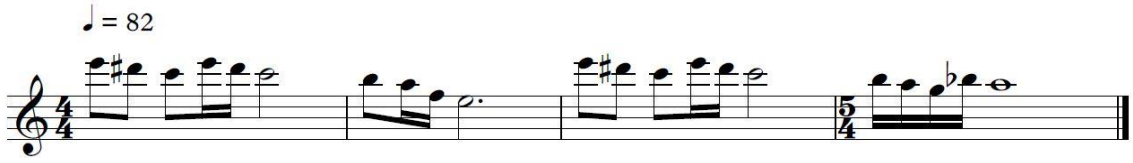
[64] *Action in Arabia*, directed by Léonide Moguy (Odeon Entertainment, 1944), DVD.

[65] Interestingly, the beginning of *Casablanca* is fairly similar to that of *Action in Arabia*, using the same type of map imagery combined with voiceover and exotic orchestral exposition.

somewhat deceptive image, considering the striking absence of Arab characters in the majority of the film). The voiceover that follows exaggerates these impressions by depicting Damascus as not just an ancient city, but an unchanging one full of mysteries: the map zooms into Syria, transitioning into shots of more camels meandering through old streets and turbaned men in marketplaces. It is at this point that the score shifts. The beating drums lose their intensity, and the string-heavy orchestration gives way to a delicate melody played by oboe, English horn, and flute, not unlike the music that accompanied Saladin at his palace in Jerusalem (see Example 4). As in Kopp's score, the music here communicates mystery and antiquity by using less-predictable metric patterns and free-flowing, hypnotic melodies.



Example 3. The frantic Arab theme.



Example 4. The exotic and alluring Arab theme.

Action in Arabia occurs nearly eight centuries after DeMille's *The Crusades*, yet both use the same visual and musical tropes in their representations of the region. This is due to the Orientalist perception of the East as timeless and static, even medieval. Following the narrator's

introduction, a brief exchange between Gordon and his friend William Chalmers (Robert Andersen) makes this clear: After Chalmers tries to flirt with Mounirah al-Rashid (Lenore Aubert)—daughter of Arab leader Abdul al-Rashid— at the airport in Damascus, he is approached by two intimidating men wearing keffiyehs (see Figure 5).[66] He exclaims: "What is this, the Middle Ages?" to which Gordon replies, "No, the Middle East, but it sometimes comes to the same thing…" In addition to being far away, the Arab world/Middle East is seen as a place stuck in time, which doubles its exoticism; as has been discussed, a different time period (especially the past) can be just as exotic as a physically foreign location. Damascus is thusly established as a place in opposition to the West, less civilized and holding more primitive values—where women are protected (or controlled) by domineering and savage men, for example.

[66] A kind of headscarf commonly worn in the Middle East.

Figure 5. Mounirah al-Rashid, flanked by her two bodyguards.

Again, much like in *The Crusades*, there are two stereotypical depictions of the Arab world that coexist in the film: the brutish and barbaric, and the exotic and intriguing. The scene with Chalmers and Gordon at the airport contains both. Even as Chalmers is captivated by an exotic Eastern woman, he is also threatened by the looming, possessive men that accompany her. Priming the audience to this stereotypical binary, the score for the title sequence and voiceover has a similar dichotomy, found between the bombastic orchestral theme that begins the film (Example 3) and the woodwind melody (Example 4) that accompanies the narrator's description of Damascus as an "age-old civilization" that breeds "espionage and intrigue." The former conveys the adventure and excitement referred to in the title (which comes onscreen as the music begins), while the latter conveys the mystery to be found in the East.

Unlike in *The Crusades*, however, where Kopp used distinct motifs to represent the Westerners and the Easterners, Webb's score is mostly concerned with scene-setting rather than indications of identity, though it still includes elements of aural juxtaposition and contrast between East and West. Some of the place-setting music in *Action in Arabia* is meant to be diegetic, as when Gordon is wandering the streets of Damascus before going to his hotel: drums, oboe, and clarinet pose as background "street music" while he passes by children begging for money, Arab men yelling and fighting over wares, and even an exotic dancer (similar music is used when Gordon returns to the bazaar later in the film as well). A suspicious-looking Arab man follows him from a distance as he ambles through the marketplace, however as soon as he steps into the Hotel International, the music instantly fades out in favor of a classical waltz, symbolizing Gordon's arrival into an oasis of "civilization" within Damascus. The Arab man does not follow Gordon inside; the hotel is a kind of Western haven in which Gordon is safe from the mysterious uncertainty that lies outside its doors. The shift to Western-style music is thus meant to symbolize a transition into an atmosphere of comfort and safety, or, in other words, familiarity.

Inside the hotel, Gordon enjoys a number of Western conveniences: gambling, whiskey, and dancing with a woman by the name of Yvonne (Virginia Bruce), who becomes his character's love interest in the film. As Gordon hangs around the hotel lobby, however, he eventually realizes that Chalmers is very late to check in, and that something has gone wrong. Authorities summon him outside, informing him that Chalmers, who had been following French diplomatic official Andre Leroux, has been mysteriously murdered. As soon as Gordon leaves the hotel and approaches the scene of the crime, the music changes again, to slow, solemn,

exotic-coded music featuring flute, English horn and clarinet. Here, the change in score serves two functions: it signifies that Gordon has left the Western oasis of the Hotel International, yet it also reminds the audience of the mystery and unfamiliarity associated with the Arab world, where anything can happen. Though the music is certainly ominous and foreign-sounding, it is significant to note that it does not completely evoke *terror*, but rather mystery and unpredictability. Additionally, music in the film is usually used to represent the locale as a whole, rather than being assigned to any particular character (or even group of people necessarily). This usage distinguishes films such as *Action in Arabia* from those in the "terrorist" category, which will be discussed later.

Gordon exhibits a complete lack of surprise at his friend's death, almost as if he expected that something like this would happen in Damascus. This is evidenced in his nonchalance in this scene and throughout the film, a contributing factor to Gordon's general self-assuredness in navigating his way through the Arab setting of the film. His attitude represents the colonialist Western cockiness in regard to the Arab world and Middle East that was so common in the middle of the twentieth century. The entire region was viewed as being essentially under European control, domesticated. Any danger that one might have encountered in the East was likewise domesticated, merely part of the Orientalist excitement and allurement that it stood for, and in truth is part of the excitement of *Action in Arabia*. The score undeniably assists in this depiction. As with most (if not all) Hollywood films of the era, the music is orchestrated using Western instruments and Western (albeit exoticist) musical styles and idioms. This serves a very specific purpose, as the music does not attempt to be authentic (except, perhaps, in the examples of implied diegetic music). Rather, it presents a Western perspective of the aural East. All

aspects of the film present the East from a Western perspective, which offers assurance to the audience that, in the end, it will be the Western characters' interests that prevail. In the scene where Gordon discovers Chalmers's corpse, therefore, the exotic cues do not signify any actual danger, but add excitement to the plot, giving Gordon a mission which only he, as the white, American protagonist, can solve. His cool demeanor through it all only confirms this effect.

Gordon embodies the concept of the arrogant Orientalist, the Westerner who knows the Orient even better than its inhabitants. He is constantly translating on behalf of the locals (essentially acting as their voice), educating other white characters about Arab culture, and in the end of the film ends up "saving" the Arabs from Nazi influence. His privileged status that his "expertise" affords him is the reason that he is never truly at risk, as well as the reason why he is apparently uniquely qualified to solve the region's problems. Said writes that Orientalism relies upon such notions of Western expertness, as well as on a

> flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand . . . The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part.[67]

Gordon's experiential knowledge is so extensive that he even claims to know more about the Orient than other Orientalists. Although he is meant to fly out the day after the murder, Gordon informs the men at the American Consulate that he wishes to stay on so he can investigate. He is told that the situation will be handled by Matthew Reed, a member at the consulate, and self-purported expert on the area. To this, Gordon replies: "Mr. Reed? The man who only knows the

[67] Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

Near East from a travel booklet?" The irony, of course, is that *Action in Arabia*'s depiction of the Near East lacks ethnographic accuracy in nearly every sense, resorting instead to various Orientalist stereotypes.

The musical counterparts to these stereotypes, while perhaps not as glaring as the set or costuming, still play an important role in modifying audience perception, albeit in more subliminal ways. As mentioned previously, *Action in Arabia*, in the same fashion as *The Crusades* and other such films of the mid-twentieth century, uses music to indicate distinct representations of the East, and specifically two kinds of filmic Arab: the "barbaric/savage" and the "exotic/mysterious." For example, after Gordon figures out that Nazis are attempting to rally the Arab tribes against the Allies, he travels to the palace of Abdul al-Rashid (the "spiritual leader" of the Arabs) to caution him against Nazi interference. The introductory shot of the palace recalls the Arab theme from the beginning of the film (Example 3). As in the film's introduction, this immediately establishes the palace's location in the "primitive" desert, while the fast-paced runs and robust orchestration represent the Arab world's rough, disorganized nature (Figure 6). As soon as Gordon arrives, Eban Kareem, a tribal leader, departs the palace, riding into the desert with his guns and horsemen, a spectacle which is similarly scored with frantic runs and "savage"-coded musical elements.

Figure 6. Abdul al-Rashid's palace, in complete desert isolation.

The exact moment that Gordon enters the palace itself, the music transforms entirely. The palace and its inhabitants, much like Saladin in *The Crusades*, epitomize the Orientalist associations of luxury and sensual pleasures with the East that exist alongside the contrasting associations of savagery and backwardness. Accordingly, any music in scenes involving al-Rashid or his daughter Mounirah is light and delicately ornamented, consisting of flute and oboe above a drone. Mounirah and her father are highly exoticized both aurally and visually and are mysterious in their own ways: Mounirah's mystery stems from her position as an exotic, seductive woman, and Abdul al-Rashid's from his continual stoic expression and cryptic, philosophical responses (Figure 7). They are the "respectable" Arabs in the film—like Saladin—although naïve: al-Rashid is completely unaware that Leroux (who is also at the palace) has

deceived them, and that Kareem is amassing the Arab tribes in collaboration with Nazi sympathizer Eric Latimer. Conveniently, however, their ignorance (and thus helplessness) puts them in the hands of Gordon, who exposes Leroux as a Nazi and comes to "save" the Arabs (i.e., Allied interests) from the Germans.

Figure 7. Mounirah and Abdul al-Rashid, portrayed as the female and male counterparts of the dignified, extravagant side of the Orient.

The al-Rashids' light and delicate music, in addition to bolstering their general exoticness and mystery through well-established musical techniques, also characterizes them as generally weak and delicate people, traits which are confirmed by their ignorance and suggestibility. "Weaker" timbres (flute, oboe, etc.) and solo instrumentation bring to mind vulnerability, and it is the vulnerability of al-Rashid and his daughter that warrants Gordon's intervention as an archetypal white savior. After Leroux attempts to hold the protagonists hostage and prevent them

from stopping Kareem, it is Gordon and Mr. Reed—the Orientalists—who save the day and get them out of the palace.

When the scene turns to Kareem and the Arab tribes in the desert, the music predictably switches back to agitated flourishes and stereotypical drum patterns, as a massive, chaotic sea of camels and people is shown onscreen. Once Kareem arrives, he dismounts, steps in front of the large crowd of Arabs (to great applause), and begins lecturing in Arabic, presumably convincing them to support the Nazis against the Allies. (His speech, as well as other Arabic dialogue in the film, is never given subtitles; the only times the audience receives English translations are through characters like Gordon.) Full orchestration then yields to just drum beats, the diegesis of which is unclear. These beats accompany Kareem's entire speech, and later, when the tribes are again shown assembling under his leadership, Webb employs expansions of the primary "Arab" theme (Example 3) over upbeat march-like rhythms, as if emulating war drums or the hoofbeats of countless riders mounted on horses or camels.

Figure 8. Eban Kareem rallying the Arab tribes to fight the Allies and compromise their efforts in the war.

The vast majority of Arabs in *Action in Arabia* are unnamed, no more than a mob to be manipulated by Western powers. Any complex character development is reserved for white characters, who use the Eastern setting to advance their own interests. The Allies and the Arabs are supposedly on the same side against a common enemy (the Nazis), however within the film there are implicit assumptions of white supremacy, as the Arabs' ignorance and impressionability enables white characters to control them. Arab characters have no agency, not even over their own villainy: unlike the films examined in Chapter III, Arab characters in *Action in Arabia* are not evil of their own accord but are corrupted by external forces. Their simplemindedness leads to their corruption by the Germans, which is also why, the very moment

that Abdul al-Rashid shows up to stop Kareem, the entire mob of Arab tribesmen immediately reverse their support for Kareem, turning against him without hesitation.

The reason that Arabs in the film are easily suggestible connects back to the two main representations of Arabs that have been discussed thus far in this chapter: the "barbaric/savage" Arab and the "exotic/mysterious" Arab. Both of these representations express some kind of inferiority on behalf of Arabs which warrants Western domination. The view of Arabs as barbaric or savage sees them as unintelligent and uncivilized, and therefore in need of organization and guidance by Western powers (as in the mindless Arab mob). On the other hand, the latter view perceives Arabs to be weak, even feminine, and therefore incapable of strong leadership (as in Abdul and Mounirah al-Rashid). Webb's score mirrors these representations and often contrasts them with each other directly. Compared to *The Crusade*'s score, which mostly juxtaposes East and West through music, *Action in Arabia* expands upon this a bit more, juxtaposing different *Eastern* depictions.

The emphasis on distinct Arab stereotypes does not mean that *Action in Arabia*'s Arab world is any more complex, however. Due to the white-centric nature of its plot, Arab elements—whether they be musical or not—are only incorporated when they serve a purpose to the wider Western narrative. The happy ending of the film shows the Western protagonists *leaving* Damascus, after supposedly having fixed its problems and making the Arab world a better place (at least for themselves). *Action in Arabia* presents an Arab world that is merely a theater for Western conflicts and adventures to be held. This changes slightly in *Lawrence of Arabia*, where, while Arabia is still portrayed in this way, Arab interests are at least ostensibly a central concern of the story.

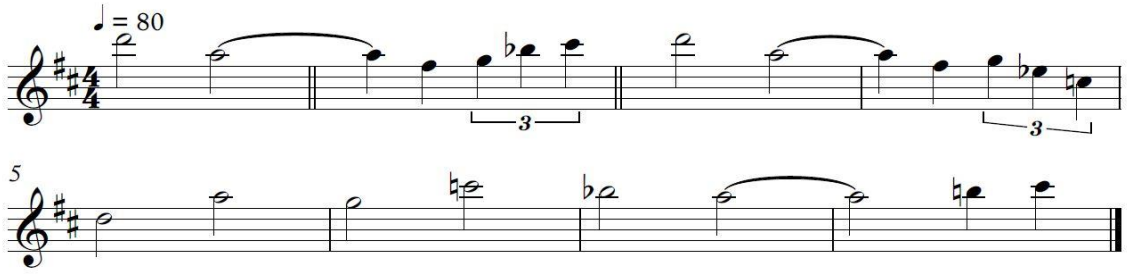
iii. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

David Lean's epic *Lawrence of Arabia* is by far one of the most ubiquitous representations of the Arab world in popular media. The film centers around the exploits of T. E. Lawrence (Peter O'Toole), the British officer who helped to instigate the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans during World War I. A film with as much cultural significance as *Lawrence of Arabia* could occupy a substantial amount of this paper, however only those themes which are immediately adjacent to this particular study will be examined. On account of its overtly colonialist plot, the film covers nearly every Orientalist representation imaginable, including rolling sands, camels, and a white adventurer who comes to tame the "savage" tribesmen. In spite of these stereotypes, however, Jamie Fries notes that *Lawrence of Arabia* "also provide[s] a sense of the region's great diversity, and present[s] Arab characters who [display] courage, loyalty, and genuine humanity."[68] The overall ethos of the film is certainly more sympathetic to Arab perspectives than many others of the period, and the character of Lawrence—while unquestionably a white savior—at least seems to be acting in the interest of the Arabs. However, the East that is portrayed in *Lawrence of Arabia* is overwhelmingly Orientalist, no more than a simplistic reduction of reality in which the title character can play out his exotic fantasies.

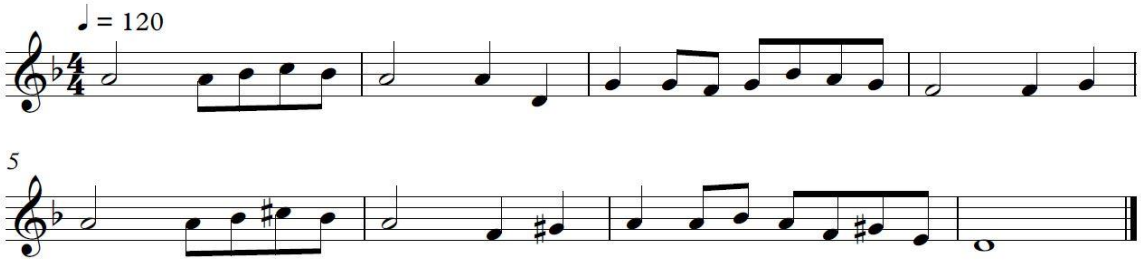
These exotic fantasies are buttressed by Maurice Jarre's iconic score, which contains the same "barbaric/savage" and "exotic/mysterious" dichotomy discussed above. The overture at the opening of the film presents these two motifs immediately, beginning with violent percussion that swells into harsh, highly chromatic brass outbursts, eventually opening up to a romantic,

[68] Fries, "Foes on Film," 131.

gushing, Arabesque refrain (Example 5). This main theme is emblematic of the feminine and sensual perception of the Orient: shapely melodic lines and mysterious harmonies hypnotically sway between simple and compound rhythms. Following this is the theme for the masculine Orient (Example 6), which is domineering and chaotic, yet war-like: hyperactive drums and lower pitches contribute to a sense of barbarity, while its exclusive use of duple rhythms recalls a kind of march—methods similar to those employed by Webb in his Arab overture. While Webb mainly emphasizes the "barbaric/savage" perception of Arabs, however, Jarre opts instead to make the "exotic/mysterious" trope the centerpiece of the score, as this is the Orient which Lawrence idealizes.

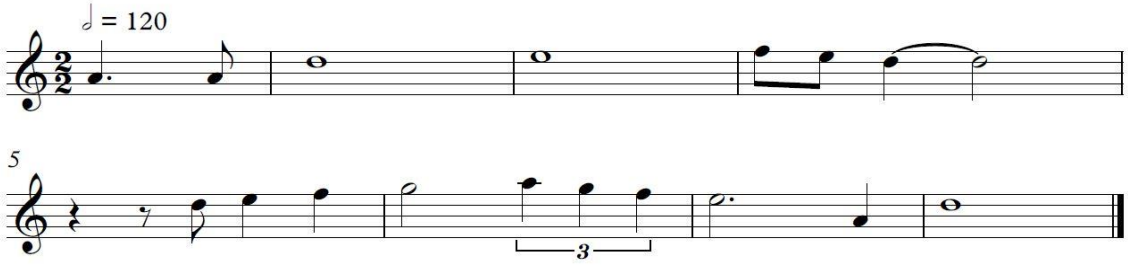


Example 5. Jarre's most recognizable theme from *Lawrence of Arabia*, representing the sensuous, feminine Orient.



Example 6. The masculine Orient, harsh and barbaric.

These two motifs are overtaken by a third theme, an arrangement of Kenneth Alford's military march *The Voice of the Guns* (Example 7). This theme often accompanies scenes involving the British imperial officers and is used generally to represent the British. Similar to the war theme of the Arabs, Jarre uses the Alford march to convey masculine qualities. Notably, however, these qualities are more dignified and orderly than the "uncivilized" music of the Arabs. Steady snare drum and low brass "oom-pahs" keep time underneath a predictable woodwind melody, as opposed to the tumultuous drums and roughness of the Arab war theme. The structured guidance of the British march thus resolves the Arab counterpart, just as the British saw themselves as the guiding force of the Arab tribes that would bring them their liberation.



Example 7. Alford's *The Voice of the Guns*, often at odds with the various Arab themes in Jarre's score.

Aside from these nondiegetic cues, a few scenes in the film use diegetic music and sound to express notions of Arabness as well. Expressing the primitive side of Arab perceptions, diegetic drums play in the background of several scenes to add the illusion of authenticity when portraying the Howeitat or other Arab tribes in their tents. Likewise, as the Arab tribes ride to Aqaba, the Arab theme from Example 6 seamlessly transitions into diegetic war drums, over

which the Arab tribeswomen holler from the cliffs to cheer on their men.[69] Adding to the clamor, the men begin to sing a war song as the stereotyped drums continue in the background. The shot goes to Lawrence, whose face reveals euphoric delight, perhaps out of pride for having "tamed" the Arabs and convinced them to follow him on this adventure, and also perhaps at experiencing these exotic sounds.

The adhan is included in one scene, outside of Prince Faisal's (Alec Guinness) camp, while Lawrence and his fellow officer Colonel Brighton (Anthony Quayle) are talking with Faisal in his tent. The establishing shot shows an overview of the camp at night; the muezzin in the background serves to emphasize that Lawrence and Brighton are now deep in the Arab world, while also exoticizing Muslim worshipping practices. Considering the conflation of Islam and terrorism that will be discussed later, it is significant to note that, though this scene establishes Muslims as Other, it does *not* automatically signify them as an enemy. Rather than being a corrupt ideology, Islam is here a contributing factor to the exoticness of the Arabs, for it appears to provide them with ancient and mysterious wisdom. Inside the tent, for instance, Faisal leans casually with a placid expression as he ponders passages from the Quran (Figure 9). His overall presence and manner of speaking are cryptic and contemplative, qualities which Lawrence seems to identify with. Indeed, Lawrence surprises both Faisal and Brighton when he finishes one of the Quranic passages from memory, a stunt which seems to pique Faisal's interest. In this moment, Lawrence exposes his Arab sympathies, bringing his allegiances into question.

[69] This is really the only scene in the film that has women in it, and even so they are all veiled, only characterized by their yelling.

Figure 9. Alec Guinness's character personifies the exotic, mysterious East that Lawrence is so attracted to.

A major part of *Lawrence of Arabia*'s plot deals with Lawrence's struggle with his own loyalties and belonging as he ostensibly "goes native," a transformation that is hinted at in the score. Jarre combines and overlays the previously-discussed motifs and musical styles at various points of the film to make subtle statements about power, place, and identity. Take, for example, Lawrence's return to the Arab Bureau after capturing Aqaba. Though Lawrence is a hero for succeeding in his mission, as he stands in front of his fellow British officers his traditional Arab garb renders *himself* an exotic Other (Figure 10). Lawrence stands awkwardly as the officers gape at him, while a solo flute plays an Arabesque melody in free meter (akin to that in both Saladin and al-Rashid's palaces). The flute, alongside the *mise-en-scène*, signifies his new positionality in this context, as well as his vulnerability. Tellingly, however, as soon as the British officers begin to cheer and congratulate him, the Alford march returns triumphantly; Lawrence is still a Briton, albeit an exotic one.

Figure 10. Lawrence has "gone native." Claiming Arab identity is as easy as putting on new clothes.

In the fantasy of the East, Lawrence is able to explore many aspects of his identity that were formerly suppressed, in particular his homosexuality and masculinity. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam note that "the orient provides an outlet for a carnivalesque play with national and gender identity," which is exactly what Lawrence experiences.[70] When he first receives his (symbolic) white robes, for instance, Lawrence whirls around and plays with his new appearance/identity. Shohat and Stam describe Lawrence's experience in this scene: "Unsheathing his sword, the O'Toole character [Lawrence] shifts the gendered signification of what is usually a phallic symbol by using it as a mirror to look at his own newly acquired 'feminine' oriental image" (Figure 11).[71] The idea of the exotic and sensual Orient appeals to

[70] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 167.

[71] Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 168.

Lawrence specifically because it allows him to play out his own fantasies, whether they be egotistical, sexual, or sadomasochistic. Even so, however, he never truly breaks free of his British identity either. Correspondingly, Jarre's assorted musical themes—in addition to being geographical and cultural signifiers—are really representations of Lawrence's personal struggles with identity and his appropriation of Arabness.[72]

Figure 11. Lawrence admires his reflection in his dagger. His new attire allows him to play with Arab (feminine) identity as if it were a costume.

The audience experiences Arabia through Lawrence's Orientalist perspective, which, in addition to deifying him, has an immense impact on the ways that Arabs are presented. Some characters, like Faisal, are regally exotic (even feminine) in the way that al-Rashid and Saladin are, which Lawrence tries to embody. However, many Arabs in the film are shown as intellectually and culturally inferior to Europeans, yet not expressly evil. Lawrence admires

[72] For more on *Lawrence of Arabia* and constructions of gender, see Rebecca Naomi Fülöp, "Heroes, Dames, and Damsels in Distress: Constructing Gender Types in Classical Hollywood Film Music" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012).

them, but in a diminutive, paternalist sort of way. This creates a space for him—as the white savior—to guide the Arabs to their salvation. He is the enlightened Westerner who will bring them out of their squalor, as he tells Sherif Ali (Omar Sharif): "So long as the Arabs fight tribe against tribe, so long will they be a little people, a silly people. Greedy, barbarous, and cruel."[73] This particular perception of Arabs as uncivilized—signified by the harsher of the two main Arab motifs (Example 6)—helps Lawrence to justify his involvement in leading the revolt. In fact, Lawrence sees himself *as* the revolt; his "positional superiority" (to use Said's term) authorizes him to represent the Arab cause, despite his not being Arab at all. This is illustrated by Lawrence's response when his followers begin to push back on his leadership later in the film: "This afternoon, I will take the Arab Revolt into Deraa, while the Arabs argue."

On the surface, *Lawrence of Arabia* may appear to be a film about pan-Arab nationalism, yet clearly the Arab Revolt of the film has very little to do with Arabs. Instead, it is merely an outlet for an Orientalist Westerner to play with an identity that is not his own and have adventures along the way (as Lawrence tells Dryden: "It's going to be fun!"). Fries claims that *Lawrence of Arabia* depicts an "unflattering" image of the British,[74] yet this does not necessarily entail positive images of Arabs. Similarly, Jarre's score continues to perpetuate the same Orientalist/exoticist tropes used by composers like Kopp and Webb, whose primary functions are to provide musical support to portrayals of Arabs as exotic, mysterious, barbaric, etc. Jarre's score is a bit unique in that it also indicates a *Western* character's Otherness, which again is a

[73] *Lawrence of Arabia*, directed by David Lean (Columbia TriStar Home Video, 2000) DVD.

[74] Fries, "Foes on Film," 130–31.

facet of the Orient's role as an expressive outlet for Lawrence. Regardless, however, nowhere in *Lawrence of Arabia* does Jarre use music to imply that Arabness is morally corrupt, hostile, or evil, as will be seen in the films in Chapter III.

III. "Terrorist" Films

Departing from the traditional ways of representing the East, the next films paint a different image, influenced by a paranoia of Islamic fundamentalism and the fear of domestic terrorism. In these films the East is no longer solely a place, but also a concept or associated identity that can be alluded to in non-Eastern settings. A film with "Eastern" themes (meaning themes of terrorism and fanaticism), in other words, need not take place in the East. This began with the release of *Black Sunday* (1977), which was the first Hollywood film to depict Islamic terrorism as a threat to the American homeland.[75] This broadens the applicability of Arab-coded musical cues, for in these films they often make statements about identity, loyalty, and ethnicity as relates to terrorism. Additionally, the geographical East no longer carries connotations of adventure or intrigue but is a dangerous place which is overwhelmingly unwelcoming to Westerners. After centuries of both formal and informal colonialism (and domestication) of the East, the terrorist trope turns Western perceptions on their head, tapping into fears of the Eastern Other leaving their domain and enacting revenge on the West directly.

Four films serve to represent the terrorist trope: *The Siege* (1998), *Body of Lies* (2008), *Argo* (2012), and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012). The scores for these films differ from those in Chapter II in several ways, but most obviously in that they incorporate non-Western instruments, using timbral cues to make the qualitative difference between "familiar" and "unfamiliar"—unmarked and marked—even more apparent than before, to emphasize unease and danger. Since the Western audience is less able to identify these sounds (as they would a violin, flute, etc.),

[75] Fries, "Foes on Film," 147.

their unfamiliarity increases their ability to be suspicious, ominous, or threatening. Any sounds associated with Arabness gain explicitly sinister connotations—hence a film like *The Exorcist* (1973) can use the adhan in its opening to immediately establish a feeling of dread and terror. The East is not a fantasy destination, nor is Arabness alluring, it is instead something to avoid or destroy altogether. In this way, these films play into contemporary fears, and push patriotic narratives at the expense of the national Other.

i. *The Siege* (1998)

Director Edward Zwick's *The Siege* almost appears to be prescient of the events that would occur on September 11 three years later. The movie takes place after the U.S. capture of a prominent terrorist suspect by the name of Sheik Ahmed bin Talal, following F.B.I. agent Anthony Hubbard (Denzel Washington) and his partner Frank Haddad (Tony Shalhoub) as they attempt to stop a terrorist cell that has been making retaliatory attacks in New York City. Numerous attacks happen throughout the film, resulting in the declaration of martial law in the city by Major General William Devereaux (Bruce Willis). *The Siege* not only demonstrates the increasing association of the Middle East with terrorism that was occurring during the 1990s, but also represents the fear of terrorism at home that was first shown in films like *Black Sunday*, which became even more prominent after 2001.

Najat Dajani considers *The Siege* to "show more maturity in dealing with Middle Eastern issues" than other films that involve terrorism. He proposes that in spite of its negative

stereotypes about Arabs as terrorists, as a whole the film is largely "self-recriminatory."[76] Dajani's assertion about *The Siege* is partially true. Unlike many similar films from around the same time, such as *True Lies* (1994) and *Executive Decision* (1996), *The Siege* does offer a certain degree of nuance in its representation of Arab characters and their culture—the internment of New York City's Arab population later in the film, for example, is clearly meant to criticize negative contemporary attitudes towards Arabs. Similarly, the character of Frank—the token "good" Arab in the film—represents a dramatic departure from the two-dimensional Arabs and Middle Easterners that Hollywood normally has presented to the public. Aside from these, however, the majority of the film's representations are overwhelmingly negative, and *The Siege* is perhaps one of the first films to directly link terrorism to Muslim worshipping practices. The film presents both subtle and overt messages, and questions of identity and loyalty play a large part in the plot, especially in regard to Arab characters.

Graeme Revell's score interacts with the film's messages in complex ways, often using exotic-sounding vocals (performed by Nona Hendryx) and duduk (performed by Djivan Gasparyan) to foreshadow, raise suspicion about a character, or more generally to bring associations about the Middle East into the Western context of the film.[77] The very first scene, for example, interweaves news reels of terrorist attacks in the Middle East with shots of a car

[76] Dajani, "Arabs in Hollywood," 74, 68. Dajani paints a generally optimistic view of trends in Arab representation, claiming an overall improvement throughout the nineties. It should be noted, however, that his thesis was published before 9/11, after which representations got worse.

[77] The duduk is indigenous to Armenia, however films often use it to denote Arabness, another example of the generalization of the East.

driving through rolling desert sands (complete with camels and goats), right away combining traditional Orientalist images with contemporary fears of terrorism. Both vocals and duduk are brought in over a dismal C# drone as it is revealed that the Sheik described in the news reels as being responsible for the attacks is in the back of the car (Figure 12). The music here serves two functions: it sets the scene as an exotic Elsewhere, yet it also brings attention to the Sheik's Arab extraction. He is clearly meant to be an Osama bin Laden-type character, yet drawing further attention to his ethnicity through musical cues suggests a potential causal link between his Arabness and his criminality. These cues are also played alongside audio of American surveillance tracking the car and President Bill Clinton announcing that "The cowards who committed this murderous act must not go unpunished."[78] As the recording of the President reiterates this, the Sheik's car is shot down and he is shown being taken into American custody.

Figure 12. Sheik Ahmed bin Talal, the Islamic fundamentalist whom American forces capture in the beginning of *The Siege*.

[78] *The Siege*, directed by Edward Zwick (Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006), DVD.

This opening sequence and its underscoring establish West and East as the principle forces in conflict, yet what follows solidifies the connection between Muslim religious practice and terrorist activity. After being taken into custody, the Sheik sits in his cell holding a *misbaḥah*[79] and chanting while wearing a star-and-crescent ring, the symbol of Islam. His voice is underscored by foreboding strings as Devereaux watches him suspiciously. While none of the music in this scene is explicitly exoticist, the emotive effect of the score in combination with Devereaux's suspicious glance plainly delineates the Sheik's faith as the corrupting force behind his character (a similar use of music—this time with duduk—appears later in the film as a terrorist prays before being tortured by Devereaux). This impression is furthered in the following scene: the minor key continues as the title text appears, and the Sheik's chanting transitions into a shot of a muezzin reciting the adhan. Between shots of the muezzin, Muslims bow in worship, however the camera begins to pan out—and the underlying score intensifies—revealing the mosque to be in New York City, rather than in the Middle East as the scene might initially imply (Figure 13). Non-diegetic exotic vocals overtake the adhan, increasing the overall feeling of apprehension and foreshadowing.

[79] Prayer beads or "worry beads."

Figure 13. As the camera pans out, the mosque from which the muezzin calls Muslims to prayer is revealed to be in New York City.

Using the adhan in this way confounds the audience's expectations dramatically. The Muslim call to prayer has been well-established in Hollywood (as well as in classical music and other performance traditions) as a signifier of *place*: a sound that one might hear in a distant Eastern locale. Its setting in the West plays with these associations to make a statement about Arab/Muslim infiltration into Western society. Indeed, this is one of the overarching themes of the entire film, as Arabs are almost invariably portrayed as deviant and suspicious individuals who stand against American values. Qualities of the "East" are therefore not merely indications of place, but instead are indications of identity and disposition that can be applied in a variety of contexts. This extends to uses of non-diegetic music and sound as well: whereas the beginning of *The Siege* and many of the films examined above use Arab (or Arab-sounding) music for scene-setting, one of its primary functions in the Western setting of this film is to label characters as Other, drawing upon the associations set up in the introduction of the film between Arabness and morality. Additionally, the particular kind of Other that is implied here is distinct from that in the

previous category of films. Take, for instance, the signifiers that accompany Saladin in *The Crusades*, which, while certainly labeling him as Other, serve mostly to bestow him with "positive" stereotypes of intrigue and mysticism. Hardly any of these can be found in films like *The Siege*, where the Arab Other has no redeeming traits.

Revell also uses these signifiers to label terrorist attacks and other violent events as acts of Arabs. Most of the terror attacks in the film are underscored with some combination of "Arab" referents, be it duduk, exotic vocals, drums, or something else. This contributes to the musical context that has been set up, where "Arab" sounds (and therefore Arab identity) equate to terrorism and depravity. Revell's use of signifiers in this way is not unique; Jerry Goldsmith's score for *Executive Decision* uses non-Western drums to bring out the perceived Arab qualities of terrorists. Similarly, whenever a terrorist attack occurs in the film, the score leaves no doubt as to who is behind it (or rather, the *ethnicity* of who is behind it). As shown in the introduction of the film, connecting aural Arabness to negative qualities and events in this way implies that being Arab somehow makes one nefarious. When Hubbard and the F.B.I. identify the fingerprints of the man behind the Bus 87 Bombing, for instance, ecstatic drum beats are played as his name appears on the screen: Ali Waziri. The music thus draws immediate attention to his Arab ethnicity.

Many scenes involving the character Samir Nazhde (Sami Bouajila) use music in this manner as well. Although once an associate of Waziri, Samir ends up working with the F.B.I. agents as an inside source in the Arab community, at the insistence of C.I.A. agent Sharon Bridger (Annette Bening), who has a close (and secretly sexual) relationship with him. Later, as Bridger is in Samir's apartment informing him that he is going to have to cooperate with the

agents, a duduk starts playing over a drone as he breaks down in exasperation. Samir is having an identity crisis; as a Palestinian he feels conflicted about cooperating with the Americans. What is especially significant in this scene is that his internal conflict is mainly divulged through the music. Samir does not actually say anything about having reservations, but the duduk brings awareness to his Eastern identity—his Otherness—while his body language demonstrates that he is aggravated. From this, the audience is left with the impression that his ethnicity (and, by association, religion) is what causes his hesitation about cooperating with the American authorities.

In a subsequent scene, Samir reminisces about his brother—who had blown up a movie theater in Tel Aviv some time before—and his path to extremism:

> You know, some people just cannot live in the camps. For my brother it was already like dying. The only thing he lives for is movies. And then some Sheik came and tell him [*sic*] that to die for Allah is beautiful. And if he does this thing, our parents will be taken care of, and he will live on in Paradise with seventy virgins. I mean, seventy? And my brother, he need to believe it very much [*sic*]. So he straps ten sticks of dynamite to his chest, and he went to the movie.

Revell's score in this scene creates a lament by combining exotic vocals and flute with melancholic strings, adding to the somber mood of Samir's retrospection while simultaneously continuing to emphasize his Palestinian identity, an identity which ostensibly stands in opposition to the interests of the United States.

Trustworthiness is another character trait that is modified by *The Siege*'s score. If the music relates a character to Arab themes, that instantly links them to terrorism and distrust. As they sit in the car in a particularly emotional scene, Bridger confesses to Hubbard that she had been responsible for training many of the extremists in Iraq as a means of combating Saddam Hussein, and that, after her program was shut down, she had helped many of the militants escape

to the United States. As it dawns on Hubbard that Bridger is indirectly responsible for the formation of the terror cells in New York, drone and duduk are once again used, only this time they denote a white American character's Otherness. In spite of her whiteness, however, Bridger's close acquaintanceship with Samir and other Arabs, and more importantly her guilt, is enough to warrant these musical signifiers. Her identity, in other words, has been altered, tainted with Arabness, a process which is communicated to the audience through music. Aural Arabness in this scene has nothing to do with actual ethnicity, but instead makes implications about a character's allegiance to the West.

Near the end of the film, as Samir and Bridger try to find and stop the last terrorist cell, the question of Arab and Muslim identity again comes into consideration. Samir informs Bridger that the terrorists will be meeting in a bathhouse in order to prepare for the attack. However, once there, it becomes clear that the bathhouse is empty, and Samir begins to undress and wash himself, the ritual purification in Islam known as *wuḍū*, which typically precedes prayer (Figure 14). In regular fashion, duduk is used to accentuate the exoticness of this practice, but it also catalyzes the realization that Samir himself is the last cell, and that he will be the one responsible for the next attack. Paralleling the beginning scenes with the Sheik, the duduk in this scene links Samir's ethnicity with his villainy. Likewise, his practice of wuḍū does the same but for his religiosity. The revelation that Samir is a terrorist counteracts any positive (or at least neutral) representations of Arabs that may be found elsewhere in the film, as it expresses the underlying message that Arabs cannot be trusted, that even "good" Arabs turn out to be evil.

Figure 14. Samir, performing a ritual cleansing before strapping explosives to himself.

From beginning to end, *The Siege* makes these kinds of implicit and explicit associations between Arab and Muslim identity and untrustworthiness. Such associations are heavily reliant on the use of music; it is primarily the score (alongside the visual of the practice of wuḍū) that stresses Samir's Arabness at the precise moment of his betrayal, and this is consistent with the ways Arab-coded music is used at other points in the film as well. In this context, signifiers like the timbre of the duduk can be used to foreshadow and raise doubt about a character's motives, as in Samir's earlier scenes, and even in the scene with Bridger and Hubbard in the car, when music is used to question her identity and loyalty.

In fact, in Bridger's dying moments, after Samir shoots her, the same duduk and drone signifiers start up again. Hubbard, after killing Samir, kneels next to Bridger and helps her through the Christian Lord's Prayer, yet she trails off before finishing, instead whispering "*Inshallah*," Arabic for "God willing." Hubbard stops short, staring in bewilderment as he realizes what she has said. Bridger is on his side, however this moment suggests that she is still at least somewhat sympathetic with the "enemy" (i.e., Islam). The music underneath her dying

moments corroborates this complexity to the audience. Bridger, a Western woman, has been seduced and deceived by Samir, an Arab man, representing a new iteration of an age-old trope. However, although previous uses of the trope might have involved a captivity (as in *The Crusades*, for example), they usually ended in one of several positive ways: the woman falls in love with the Arab, the Arab turns out to actually be a white man (as in *The Sheik*), or the woman is saved by a white hero. In Bridger's case, it is significant that her trust in Samir ends with her murder.

It should be acknowledged that there are many other ways that exotic-sounding music is used in the film, including some instances that are not openly negative. Several sequences highlight the struggle of New York City's Arab population as they deal with discrimination and even incarceration on account of Islamophobic backlash to the attacks. Very often these sequences show Muslims praying outside of terrorist or terrorist-coded contexts, and include exotic-sounding (but melancholic, and therefore sympathetic) vocals that serve as a lament for their plight. However, these demonstrations of empathy and compassion for the Arab community mostly fall flat and seem out of place in light of the associations that are being made in the majority of the film: every single major Arab character in *The Siege* (with the exception of Frank) turns out to be a terrorist. Moreover, every single one of these characters is accompanied by Arab-coded music, especially duduk, which offers their Arabness as an explanation for their evil.

The Siege is a perfect example of the ways that musical representations of Arab and Middle Eastern themes began to change as a result of shifting public perceptions. Qualitatively, signifiers changed—partially on account of globalization, non-Western instruments began to be

incorporated regularly, rather than using Western instruments in "exotic" ways. However, the main difference is semiotic: *The Siege* represents both an expansion and a reduction of what Arab-coded signifiers can stand for in popular film. An expansion, because Arabness no longer primarily connotates geography, but can also suggest a state of being/degree of corruption. And a reduction, because any associations of Arab-coded music with "positive" stereotypes have largely given way to extremely negative ones. By continually using Arab-coded music and sounds almost exclusively as signifiers for evil and terrorism in a variety of contexts, Revell's score strips away exotic and mystical associations in favor of those of mistrust, suspicion, and foreboding. This musical context makes it very difficult for any positive portrayals of Arabs in *The Siege* to exist at all.

ii. *Body of Lies* (2008)

Body of Lies, directed by Ridley Scott and with music composed by Marc Streitenfeld, is far more overtly political than *The Siege*. Set in the Arab world, it involves C.I.A. agent Roger Ferris's (Leonardo DiCaprio) mission to capture the elusive terrorist al-Saleem, whose organization is responsible for several recent attacks in the West. In a Hollywood in which films like *The Siege* continually use Arab-coded music and sounds to trigger negative emotions, Streitenfeld use the same musical associations to convey a more general sense of danger, typically through liberal use of chromaticism and augmented seconds in strings, as well as through non-Western instruments and drums. As a spy thriller, the film relies heavily on suspense, and this is achieved through constant musical reminders of the film's setting. In this way, the score functions quite similarly to that of *Action in Arabia* or *Lawrence of Arabia*, as it

creates a particular atmosphere built on Orientalist associations, however there are significant qualitative differences between them. Unlike many earlier films, the Arab atmosphere in *Body of Lies* is inherently threatening to the Westerner, and not in a way that contributes to any sense of adventure, as in Chapter II. While Ferris could perhaps be compared to Orientalists like Michael Gordon or T. E. Lawrence (he becomes romantically involved with a Jordanian girl, can quote lines from the Quran in Arabic, and repeatedly mentions his hope to one day make Amman, Jordan his home), his interest in the East ends up nearly killing him; he proves unable to master the region or its peoples.[80]

From the beginning of the film, Arabs are shown as a threat to Western civilization. In the opening scene, onscreen text sets the scene in Manchester, England, however the first shot is of al-Saleem himself, addressing his followers through a video camera, taking credit for a previous attack and warning of future ones to come: "We will avenge the American wars on the Muslim world. We will come at them. Everywhere. We will strike at random, across Europe and then America, continually. We have bled. And now . . . they will bleed."[81] Arab terrorists are shown watching the video and making bombs in their apartment, while an ominous *rebab*[82] underlines their Arabness, and therefore their corruption (similar to Revell's use of Arab signifiers in *The Siege*). In the midst of their plotting, police forces show up at the apartment, yet

[80] A comparison might be made with Lawrence's character in *Lawrence of Arabia*, who ends up deeply traumatized by his experiences in the East (being beaten and presumably raped at Deraa). However, unlike Ferris, Lawrence successfully enacts revenge on the Turks for his abuse, and *does* exhibit mastery over the Arabs, who view him as a godlike figure.

[81] *Body of Lies*, directed by Ridley Scott (Warner Home Video, 2009), DVD.

[82] A bowed string instrument common to the Arab world and even East Asia.

once the terrorists realize that they are about to be caught, they blow up the building with a stereotypical utterance of the *Takbīr*: "*Allahu akbar*" ("God is the greatest"). As the building explodes, flute comes in to once again bring attention to the fact that it was *Arab* terrorists who were responsible.

The fact that the police failed to stop the attack represents the pervasive threat that Islam and Arabs pose to Western society, and the West's subsequent inability to deal with that threat. In the end, Ferris is not even the one to capture al-Saleem: it is Hani Salaam (Mark Strong) of Jordanian Intelligence, who rescues Ferris after he is captured by the terrorists. Ferris's impotence in successfully completing his mission—not to mention the fact that an Arab agency bested the C.I.A.—reveals a broader cultural fear that is expressed in all of the films in this category: that the West will lose its global hegemony and be brought to its knees by the East. Following the various Middle Eastern-related events that have threatened the American imperial project over the last several decades, the West is afraid of its supposed vulnerability. This sentiment is expressed in the beginning of the film by Ferris's superior, Ed Hoffman (Russell Crowe):

> So what's changed is that our allegedly unsophisticated enemy has cottoned on to the factually unsophisticated truth: We're an easy target. And our world as we know it is a lot simpler to put to an end than you might think. We take our foot off the throat of this enemy [Arabs/Muslims] for one minute, and our world changes completely.

Al-Saleem's statement about striking within Europe and America expands the threat outside of the Arab world's geographical boundaries, which justifies the need to subdue the East. This belief is what makes Ferris's mission so pressing, redolent of President George W. Bush's "crusade" on terrorism. Ferris must infiltrate the Arab world to eliminate terrorism from within. While many aspects of the American War on Terror were no doubt neocolonial, Hoffman

presents it as if it is a preemptive measure to prevent the *West* from being colonized by the *East* in an ironic perversion of the status quo. Hoffman represents a very particular—and somewhat satirized—type of American perspective, yet this obsession of the United States (the "green terror" as Edwards calls it) is pervasive throughout the whole of *Body of Lies*. Therefore, rather than selectively using musical cues to indicate identity or place, nearly all of Streitenfeld's score codes as Arab and sinister, mirroring the ubiquitous Arab/terrorist threat to Ferris.

Since such musical cues, by virtue of their Arabness, signify danger, Streitenfeld often uses them in more specific ways to foreshadow and increase suspense, especially if they are preceded by the absence of non-diegetic music (what Gorbman calls "structural silence")[83]. One such instance occurs when Ferris and his partner Bassam (Oscar Isaac) drive out into the countryside of Iraq to meet Nizar, a terrorist who is looking to offer inside information in exchange for asylum. Once they arrive, Bassam calls Nizar, who refuses to come out unless one of them steps outside the car. As Bassam argues with him on the phone about this, the silence is broken by ney, which subtly hints that something is off. Though the meeting with Nizar turns out to be legitimate, introducing him in this way assigns him a degree of suspicion and puts the audience on edge. Similar uses of ney, drums, or other instruments occur elsewhere in the film, especially during or after acts of terror and violence. Non-diegetic sound is also used, and the adhan is heard a few times in the film, yet never in the context of Muslims actually worshipping. Instead, it accompanies horrific scenes of violence, as when Omar Sadiki's corpse turns up beaten and disfigured after he is interrogated by al-Saleem's men (Figure 15). In this scene, the

[83] Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 19.

call to prayer depicts Islam as a violent religion that condones these types of actions. It is not, as in *The Crusades*, an indication of exoticness or mystery, but is meant to raise tension and link the violence that the audience is experiencing to Arab and Muslim identity, and the world that the inhabit.

Figure 15. Omar Sadiki lies dead amongst trash while a muezzin's voice can be heard calling the faithful to prayer in the background.

The absence of romantic depictions of the Arab world make it especially frightening. When Ferris turns himself in to al-Saleem's men in exchange for Aisha (Golshifteh Farahani), who has been kidnapped, he is stuffed in the back of a van and taken into the remote Syrian desert. They pass camels and rolling sands, images which a film like *Lawrence of Arabia* might have romanticized, however in Ferris's context it is not beautiful or fantastic; its isolation is terrifying, for he is afraid that they are going to leave him there to die. Solo rebab plays in the background as the van travels further into the desert, heightening the fear of the situation. After being left alone in the desert for a time, drums start up as a retinue of vans drive towards Ferris, eventually surrounding him. Combined with the primitivism of the drums, this produces an

image of Ferris being surrounded by "savage" Arabs. Blindfolded, the terrorists throw him into a prison cell, which is underscored by ney. Every single negative experience that Ferris experiences, especially as the film approaches its climax, includes an Arab-coded musical cue.

Whether musically or otherwise, *Body of Lies* never romanticizes the Arab world; it is only depicted in terms of its relation to terror. Existing tropes of backwardness and barbarity are exaggerated even further, as when al-Saleem, an ostensible holy man of Islam, tortures and attempts to execute Ferris. The Arab world is thus an isolating and dangerous place that is out of (Western) control. "Nobody's coming for you," al-Saleem whispers to Ferris as he smashes his fingers with a hammer. "Welcome to Guantanamo." In this line, al-Saleem addresses the ultimate Western anxiety: that the Arab world will seek retribution for their suffering. The Arab world/Middle East was never seen as a safe place, however in the past the risk of danger combined with Western hubris, enabling the East to be a place of adventure. In the age of terrorism, it is no longer a desirable location for a Westerner. This is why Ferris's appreciation for the region is considered to be so unusual by other characters. At the end of the film, Ferris tells Hoffman that he likes the Middle East. Hoffman laughs upon hearing this. "Ain't nobody likes the Middle East, buddy," he says. "There's nothing here to like."

iii. *Argo* (2012)

One of the byproducts of the West's generalization of its Others is that stereotypes and misconceptions concerning Arabs and the Arab world are also applied to other places and ethnicities in the Middle East. Islam acts as a unifying thread between a wide range of communities, which enables the West to paint any Islamic group with the same broad brush.

Iranians/Persians are one such group who are neither ethnically nor linguistically Arab, however, due to Western Islamophobic generalizations, they are subject to the exact same issues of popular media representation under scrutiny here. In *Covering Islam*, Said specifically refers to the impact that the 1979 Iran hostage crisis had on the ways that Western media portray Iran and Islam:

> It was the leap from a specific experience [the hostage crisis]—unpleasant, anguished, miserably long in duration—to huge generalizations about Iran and Islam that the hostage return licensed in the media and in the culture at large. Once again, in other words, the political dynamics of a complex historical experience were simply effaced in the service of an extraordinary amnesia. We were back to the old basics.[84]

The "old basics" that Said refers to are the perceptions of Arabs and Muslims as a single entity with universally negative qualities. Additionally, with each negative Middle East-related incident that has occurred in the decades since—especially 9/11—the public perception of the hostage crisis has retrospectively become increasingly colored with the view of the Middle East as a hotbed of terrorism.

Therefore, Ben Affleck's *Argo*, which covers C.I.A. operative Tony Mendez's (Ben Affleck) mission to evacuate six U.S. diplomats during the crisis, is not an objective retelling of those events, but is unquestionably a product of an Islamophobic, post-Gulf War, post-9/11 social context. The film contains comparable portrayals of Iranians (and uses of music) to those dealing with Arabs in the other "terrorist" films in this chapter, although with slight differences. Unlike in *The Siege*, for example, the Iranian threat in *Argo* is about Iran as a place, and not so much about Iran as an infiltrating force in Western society. There are aspects of this: the

[84] Said, *Covering Islam*, lxii.

beginning scenes in which Iranian revolutionaries storm the American Embassy certainly represent a desecration of what was supposedly a Western save haven amidst an alien environment. In stark contrast to the adventurous locale of *Action in Arabia* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, the Middle East of *Argo*—a proxy for the Middle East of today—is a very dangerous place, for Westerners most of all.

Alexandre Desplat's score for *Argo* never depicts Iran as an exotic or fantastic place, but only as one of fear and terror. In interviews, Desplat repeatedly referred to the "otherworldly" sound that he was looking for in representing Iran:

> I suggested that when we hit the Iranian territory, we change the color of the music . . . That's where I suggested to bring in some incredible masters of Persian or Turkish music that I've known through the years . . . To create an *otherworldly* [emphasis mine] sound of tension to put the audience suddenly off balance. So like the hostages and Tony Mendez, hearing this music surrounding you makes you feel really uneasy and [as if you're in] unknown territory.[85]

> With *Argo*, I needed to make the danger seem *otherworldly* [emphasis mine] at first, but so emotion can come out of the danger.[86]

The "masters" that Desplat mentions are Syssan Deyhim on vocals, Kudshi Erguner on ney, Derya Turkan on kemenche, Dimitris Mahlis on oud, and Bijan Chemirani and Greg Ellis on various kinds of percussion. The decision to change the "color of the music" with these instruments once Mendez arrives in Iran is not unusual; film composers often use music to

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[85] Julie Miller, "*Argo* Composer Alexandre Desplat on Preventing Ben Affleck's Film from Sounding 'Cheesy' and Creating *Zero Dark Thirty*'s 'Middle Ages' Score," *Vanity Fair*, February 22, 2013.

[86] Matt Zurcher, "Interview: Alexandre Desplat on Composing for 'Argo' & 'Zero Dark Thirty,'" *The Film Experience*, February 18, 2013, accessed March 22, 2019, http://thefilmexperience.net/blog/2013/2/18/interview-alexandre-desplat-on-composing-for-argo-zero-dark.html.

indicate setting. However, Desplat specifically employs these "otherworldly" sounds to perpetuate preexisting notions of this particular setting as dangerous. This is the general image of Iran throughout the film: an entirely different world from the West, but not one of adventure and intrigue. As one of the six tries to convince another that they have no choice but to trust Mendez, he asks, "This is the game, Joe. What world are you living in?" Joe's reply? "The one where they're hanging people from construction cranes, Bob!"[87]

The referent of Joe's ambiguous "they" is Iranians a whole. In typical Orientalist fashion, *Argo* does not distinguish between different types of Iranians, nor does it acknowledge that any diversity exists amongst Iranians at all. At this point in this study, it is likely of little surprise that Iranians in *Argo* are not offered detailed characterization to the same extent that Western characters are. Just like Arabs in *Action in Arabia* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, Iranians in *Argo* are mostly seen as members of massive, chaotic mobs, all of whom are violently opposed to the United States. Their communalism is a symptom of their primitivism; C.I.A. officer Jack O'Donnell (Bryan Cranston) refers to Iran as a "sixth-century shithole," and characters in *Argo* constantly comment on the risk of torture, gruesome execution, etc. The Iranian mobs function differently from those in Chapter II, however. While they are similarly dehumanized and lacking in characterization, they are not pawns to be moved at will by Western powers. Rather, they represent the sheer numbers that threaten American interests, and the fact that they *cannot* be controlled is precisely what makes them so frightening.

[87] *Argo*, directed by Ben Affleck (Warner Home Video, 2013), DVD.

Throughout the film, mobs are an ever-present threat looming over the protagonists, and they seem to be solely motivated by a hatred for everything American. The film opens with a short sequence that establishes *Argo*'s historical context and the events that preceded the 1979 Revolution. Although this introduction briefly acknowledges the horrors committed by the Shah and his regime that led to the revolution, it portrays the revolutionaries' primary motivations as a backlash to the Shah's Westernization campaign, which, as the film points out, "[enraged] a mostly traditional Shi'ite population." Immediately following this exposition, the film's action begins *in medias res* with an Iranian revolutionary burning a U.S. flag above a sea of protestors outside the U.S. Embassy in Tehran (Figure 16). The placement of these two images next to each other casts the protestors (who represent all Iranians) as being resistant to the Western idea of civilization. Similarly, by downplaying the oppression that the Iranian people experienced under the Shah's regime, the film implies that they are angry solely because they are fundamentalists who hate the West.

Figure 16. The burning of an American flag before a mob of angry protestors break into the U.S. Embassy.

Although occasionally underscored with ney and vocals, the mobs in *Argo* are often distinguished by their lack of scoring, which brings attention to diegetic sound. The most conspicuous diegetic representation of the Iranians in the film is their incomprehensible yelling, which is an oppressive auditory force that often seems to close in on the American protagonists. One scene epitomizes this usage of diegetic sound particularly well. Mendez's plan to help extract the hostages (who are hiding in the Canadian ambassador's house) involves them posing as a Canadian film crew, part of which involves the group taking a van to the bazaar to give the impression that they are scouting for filming locations. On their way to the bazaar, the van encounters a mob of demonstrators, who quickly surround them on all sides (Figure 17). By using mostly shots from inside the car, and relying exclusively on diegetic sound, the audience is immersed into the experience of the hostages. The only sounds which can be heard are the deafening roar of the crowd and the banging of their fists on the outside of the van. Neither of the scenes which precede or follow this contain any music either, emphasizing the domineering aural presence of the Iranian mobs as well as their visual presence.

Figure 17. Iranian demonstrators press in on the protagonists' van, yelling and banging on the vehicle's exterior.

Desplat scores this looming threat through his use of "otherworldly" (i.e., non-Western) timbres. In the context of the plot, all danger is Iran-centric: most of the film's apprehension begins once Mendez arrives in Iran, and from that point forward, the entire trajectory of suspense is directed towards getting the protagonists out of the country, to Western safety. Before Mendez even arrives in the Middle East, as he pulls up to Dulles International Airport, a brief oud passage hints at the dangerous journey that he is about to embark on. "I should've brought some books to read in prison," Mendez tells O'Donnell in the car. "Nah," O'Donnell retorts, "They'll kill you long before prison." With that, Mendez leaves the car, and drums and oud—the sound of the murderous Other—continue as he enters the airport. As the plane takes off, vocals further imply his destination, and the shot turns to television footage of the Ayatollah Khomeini declaring that the Iranian people are "looking forward to martyrdom."

Before flying into Iran, Mendez first stops in Istanbul, which is similarly announced with ney and kemenche, however it is when he enters Iranian airspace that the score's tone shifts for the rest of the film. As Desplat describes it:

> When we get to the Iranian airspace, you hear this voice—this great Persian singer Sussan Deyhim does a sort of jazz scatting, but in a Persian way. And on top of that, she sings a melody like a lament. That is going to keep on going during the moments of fear and emotion during the second half of the film.[88]

The specific track that Desplat is describing is titled "Scent of Death" on the soundtrack album,[89] and occurs in the film the exact moment that the flight attendant announces their entrance into

[88] Miller, "Composer Alexandre Desplat."

[89] Alexandre Desplat, "Scent of Death," on *Argo (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)*, 2012, Spotify.

Iranian airspace. The ominous and foreboding track continues as a straight-faced Mendez makes his way through the airport (which is covered with posters of the Ayatollah). The camera constantly shows close-ups of the Iranians that surround Mendez, as if every one of them is a potential threat, giving the impression that Mendez might be discovered and attacked at any moment (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Alone in a sea of Iranians, Mendez is in legitimate danger. This is quite different from master Orientalists like Michael Gordon or T. E. Lawrence, to whom Eastern peoples readily submit themselves.

For a brief moment, as he rides from the airport to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mendez experiences an Iran that is perhaps more peculiar than intimidating. As a taxi takes him through Tehran's disorienting traffic, upbeat drums and playful oud underscore the sight of people going about their days, including shots of women in chadors[90] eating Kentucky Fried Chicken. From the security of the car, Mendez can look out upon this other world and gawk at its strangeness. This is the only part of the entire film where Desplat's "otherworldly"

[90] A garment that is the length of the entire body, commonly worn by women in Iran.

sounds convey anything other than negative emotions. This feeling is shattered, however, for Mendez's taxi then passes by a military truck, at which point the oud and drums drop out and are replaced by a much slower, eerie combination of vocals, kemenche, and ney. Like the music, the pace of the shot abates as well: time slows down as Mendez watches the armed members of the Revolutionary Guard go by and sees a man who has been hung by a construction crane. Desplat scores this tonal switch effectively: just as Mendez's brief experience of a non-threatening Iran is shattered, so too is the audience's experience of a non-threatening *aural* environment also shattered. The silence which immediately follows this scene, as he arrives at his destination, represents Mendez's snap back to reality. Seeing the hanged man was a sobering experience; never again will he forget the kind of place he is in, and the kind of people he is dealing with.

The climax of the film begins when Mendez and the other Americans head to the airport to attempt their escape. The crew's final day in Iran is announced with a muezzin's adhan at dawn, serving as a final reminder of the foreign and hostile environment in which they find themselves. Again, Desplat builds a sense of danger and suspense through Middle Eastern instruments and vocals. However, this is magnified with an increased presence of drums once the Revolutionary Guard attempts to stop the plane after realizing who they have unwittingly let through security. Drums help to increase the film's tempo, while simultaneously assigning qualities of primitivism to the pursuing Iranians. Though they have been duped by the Americans' clever ploy, they scramble in their trucks and police vehicles to stop the plane from taking off, in vain. It is only once the plane leaves Iranian airspace that full orchestral color comes in for the first time. The orchestra represents a return to the familiar and comfortable West (or at least a departure from the unfamiliar and dangerous East). After this point, the rest of the

film's score lacks any further musical references to the East. Safety has been achieved, and thus the film's soundscape returns to Western idioms.

As in *The Siege*, *Argo*'s portrayal of Iran is overwhelmingly negative, and represents the shrinking space in today's Hollywood for any kind of exotic or fanciful Orient, for by far the dominant associations of the Middle East in the West today are of terrorism and danger. When Mendez visits the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to apply for a permit to film his fictitious movie, he tells the officer that they want to shoot "landmark sites" like the bazaar and the palace. With a slight scoff, the officer tilts his head: "I see. The exotic Orient. Snake charmers, flying carpets . . . ." While this may be the kind of Orient that Mendez and his crew were looking to put in their film, it is not the Orient that Affleck and Desplat create in *Argo*. Not even once in *Argo* is Iran portrayed as an exotic or fantastic place, as with the films in Chapter II; there are no "positive" stereotypes. Rather, Iran and Iranians are only shown as sources of fear and terror, and any musical cues that are used to represent them evoke similar negative emotions.

iv. *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012)

Desplat also composed the score for *Zero Dark Thirty* (directed by Kathryn Bigelow), which traces the manhunt for Osama bin Laden in the decade that followed 9/11. C.I.A. agent Maya (Jessica Chastain) is on the team assigned to this task, and the film follows their mission to acquire as much information as possible about the workings of al-Qaeda and the location of its leader.[91] *Zero Dark Thirty* has been heavily criticized for its depictions of Arabs and Muslims,

[91] Much of *Zero Dark Thirty* takes place in Pakistan, which is neither a part of the Arab world nor the Middle East, however the terrorists which Maya and her team deal with are Arabs.

and some have claimed that the film is responsible for a rise in Islamophobic and anti-Arab sentiment on social media.[92] There are many problematic aspects of the film and its representations; it depicts torture as if it is an effective way of gathering intelligence (which has shown to be false[93]) and presumes that all Arab characters are guilty. Even when Arabs claim to be innocent, they turn out not to be, perpetuating the notion that Arabs cannot be trusted. Desplat's score connects Arabness with such suspicion in much the way as has been discussed previously in this chapter, through the use of non-Western instruments and "otherworldly" sounds (as Desplat described them). Again, Desplat collaborated with various non-Western musicians to produce the score: Kudsi Erguner on ney and Levon Minassian on duduk, while occasionally incorporating electric cello, performed by Vincent Segal.

These sounds are used at times in a similar way to those in *Argo*—to indicate the danger that an Eastern setting poses to an American protagonist. For example, As Maya arrives at the American Embassy in Islamabad at the beginning of the film, Desplat places an eerie duduk melody over a drone in the background as her car pulls up. Shots of armed guards surrounding

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Additionally, as with the Iranians in *Argo*, terrorist stereotypes usually associated with Arabs are also applicable to Pakistanis.

[92] Twitter posts from viewers of the film include "Zero Dark Thirty makes me want to shoot at Arabs with assault rifles," "I wanna go shoot brown people now while wearing night vision googles. just because of how b[adass] zero dark thirty was," "Zero dark thirty makes me hate muslims," and "Zero dark thirty made me want to shoot any Arab in the face. #patriot." Adam Horowitz, "The Reviews Are In: 'Zero Dark Thirty makes me hate muslims,'" *Mondoweiss*, January 17, 2013, accessed April 4, 2019, https://mondoweiss.net/2013/01/reviews-thirty-muslims/.

[93] Jane Mayer, "Zero Conscience in 'Zero Dark Thirty,'" *The New Yorker*, December 14, 2012.

the building, some of which search her car before she can pull in, intensify the precariousness of Maya's situation. These images remind the audience of the dangers that Maya faces as an American in an unknown, hostile environment, while the duduk emphasizes the specific Otherness that faces. In a way, the duduk does underline a certain exotic quality of the setting, but not one that is romanticized in any way. The characters' opinions of their surroundings are summarized pretty efficiently in the first interaction that Maya has with her superior, Joseph Bradley (Kyle Chandler), who asks: "How do you like Pakistan so far?" Without hesitation, Maya replies: "It's kinda fucked up."[94] Pakistan is not a friendly place for the American protagonists. Desplat scores the daily threat of attack that the Americans face through a score that, in addition to incorporating non-Western timbral signifiers, frequently uses minor intervals, chromaticism, and augmented seconds, qualities that older films might have used to indicate adventure or intrigue yet have now been repurposed.

Diegetic cues like the adhan are used to signify location, yet what these cues say about the location is invariably negative. The call to prayer can be heard at a few points in the film, usually to subtly draw attention to the terrorists' Muslim faith. The adhan can be heard clearly when I.S.I. agents[95] capture Abu Faraj al-Libbi, who is suspected as having close ties to bin Laden. Agents strap what are presumably explosives to a courier's leg, telling him "You know how this works? God willing, we won't have to use it." The courier walks nervously across a courtyard towards Faraj before I.S.I. agents dressed in burqas capture him (Figure 19). The

[94] *Zero Dark Thirty*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow (Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2013), DVD.

[95] Inter-Services Intelligence, the main Pakistani intelligence agency.

adhan continues (quite loudly) throughout, linking Islam with notions of terrorism, suicide bombings, and violence. The adhan is used elsewhere to make this point as well, creating a filmic context such that any scenes in which it can be heard are subsequently colored with hostility.

Figure 19. I.S.I. agents dressed as women in burqas point their rifles at Faraj.

The adhan is often accompanied by duduk or other instrumental signifiers of Otherness, which by themselves also conflate Arabness or the Muslim faith with terrorism. Desplat specifically uses the duduk to bring attention to the ethnicity of terrorists and to generally foreshadow acts of terrorism. In the third part of the film, the C.I.A. receives a video taken at a meeting of bin Laden's inner circle, sent to them by a Jordanian doctor by the name of Humam Khali al-Balawi, a mole who wants to inform for the C.I.A. As the video plays, drone and duduk add a sense of ominousness which again associates the terrorists with Arab identity as a whole. Similar duduk themes can be heard during numerous terrorist attacks in the film. One

particularly significant scene is when the C.I.A. ask Balawi to meet at the American military base at Camp Chapman, in Afghanistan. The Americans await his arrival in silence, when a low C# drone gradually fades in. Over this, a duduk starts playing as Balawi's car approaches in the distance. The shot turns to the inside of the car, showing a single (brown) hand on the steering wheel, yet no face. The duduk rises in pitch, ornamentation, and intensity as the car gets closer to Camp Chapman, eventually fading out with its arrival. Balawi slowly exits the car, and—with an utterance of the Takbīr—detonates a bomb.

All of the suspense and foreshadowing in this scene results from Desplat's inclusion of duduk. By this point in the film, its use as a signifier for "evil" Arabs is well established, so that it creates dramatic irony; the audience knows that Balawi is suspect before any of the characters do. The fact that Balawi is a Jordanian Arab has already been established, therefore the only reason to emphasize his Arabness is to denote him as one of the "bad" Arabs. This raises doubt as to whether or not there can even be such a thing as a "good" Arab; this scene is the apex of the film's message that Arabs cannot (and should not) be trusted. Every aspect of the scene serves to emphasize his Otherness, even though he is supposed to be an ally: the quiet "calm before the storm" makes the introduction of duduk more dramatic, and showing the car only from a distance raises suspense. Even when the car is shown from the inside, the driver's face is obscured. This is the one Arab character whom the Americans are ostensibly able to trust, and yet he is Othered in nearly every way possible.

The complete premise of *Zero Dark Thirty* involves eliminating this Arab threat by taking out bin Laden. However, at the end of the film, when Seal Team Six is flying away with the al-Qaeda leader's dead body, the music is anything but triumphant. Rather, a trumpet and

duduk play a bleak duet that evades emotional closure, as might be expected at the end of a successful mission. Part of this is a representation of Maya's exhaustion after a decade of searching; she is incredulous that she was finally able to capture bin Laden. Yet in the context of the film, bin Laden merely served as a focal point for a broader Arab/Muslim enemy, whom the War on Terror's crusade aims to destroy. In an interview, Desplat referred to his score for *Zero Dark Thirty* as "archaic and dark . . . [bringing] us back to Middle Ages where two kingdoms are trying to kill each other."[96] Unlike in the films in Chapter II, however, where Arab "medievalism" was an indication of their lack of intelligence and "civilization," the terrorist trope emphasizes Arabs' supposed cruelty, lack of humanity, and draconian nature. Additionally, the signifiers Desplat uses in *Zero Dark Thirty* in scenes of violence and terrorism, like the signifiers used in the other films in this chapter, are not representative of a single individual or isolated threat, but stand for Arabness more generally. This is the cultural fear and national Other which "terrorist" films play into, and which Arab(-coded) music and sounds have come to represent.

[96] Miller, "Composer Alexandre Desplat."

Conclusion

There may be "room in the American imaginary for multiple foreign Others" as Edwards claims, however in regard to Arab representation this room seems to be shrinking. Because of the changing hegemonies that perpetuate Orientalism, contrasting "positive" and "negative" stereotypes do not coexist within one film as often as they used to. Films like *Action in Arabia* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, each of which contain several "negative" stereotypes, simultaneously romanticize the East through music and other techniques (e.g., in the contexts of al-Rashid's palace, Lawrence's adventures, etc.). Recent "terrorist" films rarely do anything other than vilify Arabs and the Middle East. For most of the twentieth century, even when Arabs were antagonists, they either were not exclusively evil or had been corrupted because of their naivete and impressionability. By contrast, "terrorist" films often use music to categorically link Arabness or Islam with malevolence. Because previous conceptions of Arabs and the Middle East no longer resonate with contemporary Western audiences to the extent that they used to, composers of these films have had to adjust how they score these peoples and places. Thus, "Arab" or "Muslim" sounds are used to denote a specific kind of Otherness that is used not only to confirm Western identity, but also to reinforce Western righteousness within a nationalist framework.

Even outside of the U.S., Hollywood's representations have had (and continue to have) a substantial impact on public perceptions, including those in the Arab world and Middle East. Khatib argues that:

> while it is important to examine Hollywood's representation of the Middle East, with Hollywood being the most powerful film industry in the world, and with its representation of the politics of the Middle East forming at least part of people's

> imagination of the region, it is necessary to compare this with how Arabs represent themselves and Others through cinema.[97]

The question of how Arab cinemas *respond* to these representations (be they terrorist or otherwise) is beyond the scope of this thesis, yet it is important to consider. A musicological investigation into responses and self-representations in scoring would be a promising possibility for future research, complementing Khatib's examinations of Arab cinemas and how Hollywood representations have affected them.[98]

Hollywood's negative portrayals do not necessarily always stem from conscious, malicious beliefs. In response to contemporary criticism of *The Siege*'s depictions of Arabs, for example, Zwick maintained that his aim was not vilification, stating in an interview that "There have been bombings by extremists . . . They are not representatives of Islam, they're not representative of the vast majority of people who love this country, but nonetheless, they exist . . . ."[99] Affleck similarly cited true events in response to criticism of Iranians in *Argo*: "This movie is about this story that took place, and it's true, and I go to pains to contextualize it and to try to be even-handed in a way that just means we're taking a cold, hard look at the

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[97] Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East*, 2.

[98] Some musicologists have already examined Orientalism's impact on cinemas outside of the West; Gregory Booth has observed how film scores in Hindi cinema depict the Middle East, noting that Bollywood composers adopt Orientalist tropes from Western film industries. Gregory D. Booth, "Musicking the Other: Orientalism in the Hindi Cinema," in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s to 1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Clayton Martin and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 315–37. Additional research could also be done into how these tropes influence fantasy or science fiction films, as alluded to in Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 303.

[99] Willow Bay, "Director Ed Zwick defends 'The Siege,'" *CNN NewsStand*, November 10, 1998, http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/Movies/9811/10/siege/.

facts."[100] Unfortunately, ostensibly impartial intentions do not matter so much as actual ramifications.

In fact, films based on true events are especially harmful. To an audience, watching a film that claims authenticity in this way reifies any associations between Arabs/the Middle East and terrorism that it presents. Many films go to great lengths to remind the audience of their legitimacy: *Zero Dark Thirty* opens with a minute and a half of actual 911 calls made by victims of the September 11 attacks, and *Argo* begins with a factual history of Iran up to the revolution. Even *The Siege*, which is entirely fictional, attempts to convey a semblance of reality by opening with real news footage of terrorist bombings. The perceived authenticity of today's "terrorist" films is further amplified by an "improvement" in physical representation over earlier films (insofar as casting) as well as in the kinds of instruments (e.g., oud, ney, duduk, etc.) that composers use in scores. In these contexts, however, where "terrorist" films use real Arab actors and instruments, the negative actions and associated sounds of Arab and Muslim characters are likewise validated. While Said rightfully admits that would be "rank hypocrisy to deny" that Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists do not exist in the world today, Hollywood films go far beyond merely acknowledging their existence. They present an image of the Arab world/Middle East in which nearly everyone is a terrorist (and in which nearly every non-Western sound is evil).

[100] "Ben Affleck: I didn't want Argo to be politicised," *Evening Standard*, October 18, 2012, https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/ben-affleck-i-didnt-want-argo-to-be-politicised-8215965.html.

Given the absence of *positive* uses of Arab representations and sounds, Western audiences are exposed to a completely one-sided view of Arabs and the Middle East. Shaheen, after analyzing more than 900 films that disparaged Arabs and Muslims, remarked:

> I am not saying an Arab should never be portrayed as the villain. What I am saying is that almost *all* Hollywood depictions of Arabs are *bad* ones. This is a grave injustice. Repetitious and negative images of the reel Arab literally sustain adverse portraits across generations.[101]

The same goes for film music. In addition to more three-dimensional Arab characters, Hollywood needs to include more positive uses of Arab or Arab-inspired music and more representation of Arabs in the world of film composition in general (it need not be pointed out that every composer in this thesis is a white man). Because Western audiences lack exposure to instruments like the oud, ney, duduk, or kemenche, these sounds are effective at conveying Otherness. However, such usage takes advantage of this unfamiliarity to forge associations between *fictionalized* Arabness (i.e., terrorism) and *actual* aspects of Arab music (or any other non-Western musics, for that matter). Due to Hollywood's privileged positionality, it has been able to portray its view of Arabs and the Middle East with relatively little resistance. Filmmakers and composers therefore have a responsibility to thoroughly evaluate the kinds of messages that they send, and reconsider how these messages influence the real world.

[101] Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs*, 11.

Filmography

I considered many films other than those above in researching this thesis. Below is an extensive (yet definitely not exhaustive) list of films that demonstrate the trends in representation that this thesis reveals, in alphabetical order.

12 Strong (2018). Directed by Nicolai Fuglsig. Music by Lorne Balfe.

Action in Arabia (1944). Directed by Léonide Moguy. Music by Roy Webb.

Aladdin (1992). Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements. Music by Alan Menken.

Arabian Nights (1942). Directed by John Rawlins. Music by Frank Skinner.

Argo (2012). Directed by Ben Affleck. Music by Alexandre Desplat.

Beau Geste (1939). Directed by William A. Wellman. Music by Alfred Newman.

Black Hawk Down (2001). Directed by Ridley Scott. Music by Hans Zimmer.

Body of Lies (2008). Directed by Ridley Scott. Music by Marc Streitenfeld.

Cairo (1942). Directed by W. S. Van Dyke. Music by Herbert Stothart.

Casablanca (1942). Directed by Michael Curtiz. Music by Max Steiner.

Captain Philips (2013). Directed by Paul Greengrass. Music by Henry Jackman.

Cleopatra (1934). Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. Music by Rudolph Kopp.

The Crusades (1935). Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. Music by Rudolph Kopp.

Executive Decision (1996). Directed by Stuart Baird. Music by Jerry Goldsmith.

The Four Feathers (1939). Directed by Zoltan Korda. Music by Miklós Rózsa.

The Garden of Allah (1936). Directed by Richard Boleslawski. Music by Max Steiner.

The Hurt Locker (2008). Directed by Kathryn Bigelow. Music by Marco Beltrami and Buck Sanders.

Lawrence of Arabia (1962). Directed by David Lean. Music by Maurice Jarre.

The Lost Patrol (1934). Directed by John Ford. Music by Max Steiner.

Morocco (1930). Directed by Josef von Sternberg. Music by Karl Hajos.

The Mummy (1999). Directed by Stephen Sommers. Music by Jerry Goldsmith.

Munich (2005). Directed by Steven Spielberg. Music by John Williams.

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time (2010). Directed by Mike Newell. Music by Harry Gregson-Williams.

Rendition (2007). Directed by Gavin Hood. Music by Paul Hepker.

The Siege (1998). Directed by Edward Zwick. Music by Graeme Revell.

Sudan (1945). Directed by John Rawlins. Music by Milton Rosen.

Syriana (2005). Directed by Stephen Gaghan. Music by Alexandre Desplat.

The Thief of Baghdad (1940). Directed by Michael Powell, Ludwig Berger, and Tim Whelan. Music by Miklós Rózsa.

Troy (2004). Directed by Wolfgang Petersen. Music by James Horner.

United 93 (2006). Directed by Paul Greengrass. Music by John Powell.

Zero Dark Thirty (2012). Directed by Kathryn Bigelow. Music by Alexandre Desplat.

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